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Alpidis, Konstantinos (2020) *Inter-ethnic conflict resolution .The case of North Macedonia*. MPhil(R) thesis.

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Inter-Ethnic conflict resolution

The Case of North Macedonia

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy

School of Social & Political Sciences

University of Glasgow

November 2019

Abstract

The current study aims to provide a better and deeper understanding of the relations between the two major ethnic groups living in the Republic of North Macedonia before and following the signing and the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, an agreement which is generally viewed as being based on a consociational approach.

The purpose of this research is not to see only the roots of nationalism in North Macedonia and how this led to an armed conflict in 2001 and to the signing of the Ohrid Framework agreement but also to examine whether the implementation of a consociation agreement such as the Ohrid Framework Agreement has worked in practice for the country and for the North Macedonian society. Do we have the creation and development of cross-cutting (as opposed to segmental) cleavages as Arend Lijphart suggests on his work about consociationalism or a divided country?

Contrary to other cases in Europe where the Theory of Consociationalism was applied, North Macedonia was not an EU member like Northern Ireland, where we had the Good Friday Agreement nor did the international community appoint a High Representative (as in the case of Bosnia) to oversee the civilian implementation of the Dayton agreement. So by examining the case of North Macedonia we can understand how a consociational approach in a country like North Macedonia can be affected by the lack of a multilateral framework between key outside parties in the original conflict and whether a multilateral framework can be considered important to sustaining functional consociational agreements.

Inter-Ethnic conflict resolution: the Case of North Macedonia

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Index of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIRN: Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

DPA: Democratic Party of Albanians

DUI: Democratic Union for Integration

EIU: Economist Intelligence Unit

EU: European Union

FYROM: Former Yugoslavic Republic of Macedonia

ICG: International Crisis Group

KLA/ UCK: Kosovo Liberation Army

MANU: Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NLA: National Liberation Army

OFA: Ohrid Framework Agreement

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PDP: Party for Democratic Prosperity

PDPA: Party for Democratic Prosperity of Albanians

PDP-NDP: People's Democratic Party

PR-party list: Proportional representation party list

PR-STV: Proportional representation single transferable vote

SDSM: Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

SFRY: Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

UBK: Administration for Security and Counterintelligence

UÇK /KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army

UNPREDEP: United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

USA: United States of America

VMRO-DPMNE: Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party
for Macedonian National Unity

Acknowledgements

To my parents,

To the people who worked for this research,

To everyone, especially my supervisors, that spent time, effort and helped for this project to become an MPhil Thesis.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Konstantinos Alpidis

Signature:

“Sire, there is no royal road to geometry”¹

Euclid (Ancient Greek mathematician, often referred to as the founder of geometry).

Introduction

Since North Macedonia’s independence there have been many instances of ethnic violence between the country’s two major ethnic groups, Slav Macedonians and Albanian Macedonians. Furthermore after the end of the Kosovo crisis, some Albanian Macedonian nationalists (Kolstø 2009: 173) founded the National Liberation Army (NLA) which according to *The Guardian* (2001), had the goal of promoting equal rights for the ethnic Albanian minority within a confederate North Macedonia in contrast to the preamble of North Macedonia’s Constitution which after the country’s independence was speaking of “a national state of the Macedonian people”². Despite the tension between the two major ethnic groups, up to February 2001 for all the predictions of many analysts, the Republic currently known as North Macedonia, a small land-locked multi-ethnic country, had managed to declare independence and stay out of the wars in former Yugoslavia and maintain its stability during the 1990s. It is worth mentioning that according to many scholars at the time, the country was *“generally considered a success story”* (Maria-Eleni Koppa 2001: 38)

Before we continue it is important to make a brief reference on the “Name Dispute” between Greece and North Macedonia. The roots of the name issue between the two countries goes back to the aftermath of World War II, when Marshal Tito separated the region that until then was called Vardar Banovina (i.e. the current Republic of North Macedonia) from Serbia, granted it the status of federal component of the then new Federal Yugoslavia, and renamed it initially "the People's Republic of Macedonia " and later "the Socialist Republic of Macedonia". In 1991 the Socialist Republic of Macedonia proclaimed its independence by predicating its existence as an independent state with the name Republic of Macedonia on the concept of the "Macedonian nation". Greece reacted to what was perceived from the country as the usurpation of its historical and cultural heritage and to the creeping territorial and irredentist claims of the new then country, and the question came before the UN Security Council. For the benefit of peaceful relations

¹ Euclid didn’t write this sentence. It is an answer he gave to his king Ptolemy the 1st who found Euclid’s seminal work, the Elements, too difficult to study, so he asked Euclid to show him an easier way to master it. According to the philosopher Proclus, Euclid gave the above mentioned answer.

² Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, 1991, preamble, retrieved on 13/11/2013 from <http://www.hri.org/docs/fyrom/fyrom-const.html#Preamble>

and good neighbourliness in the region, the Security Council passed two resolutions [817³ (1993) and 845⁴ (1993)] which made recommendations with a view to finding a swift solution to the name dispute and the remaining outstanding issues. In 1993, upon the recommendation of the Security Council, and following the decision of the General Assembly, our the Republic of Macedonia country was granted membership in the United Nations under the provisional name of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia until an agreed solution was reached. On 17 June 2018, Foreign Ministers of Greece N. Kotzias and of the then Macedonia N. Dimitrov signed in Prespes lakes, the *"Final Agreement for the settlement of the differences as described in the UN Security Council resolutions 817 (1993) and 845 (1993), the termination of the Interim Agreement of 1995 and the establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the two Parties"*. In particular, the "Prespes agreement⁵" provides, among other things, the renaming of Republic of Macedonia to "Republic of North Macedonia" while at the same time makes clear that its official organs and other public entities shall be in line with the official name or its short name, that is, "of the Republic of North Macedonia" or "of North Macedonia". In addition mostly because of the Skopje 2014 project that we will discuss more in next chapter, North Macedonia should review the status of monuments, public buildings and infrastructures on its territory referring in any way to ancient Hellenic history and civilization and take appropriate corrective action to effectively address the issue and ensure respect for the Hellenic historic or cultural patrimony.

For the purpose of this Thesis and in order to comply to the provisions of Prespes Agreement we will use North Macedonia's new name for the state and its institutions except from the few times when changing the name could affect the meaning or the power of some quotes.

This image of a tolerant peaceful North Macedonia was compromised by the armed conflict that arose in 2001 between the North Macedonian State Army and the NLA. However, this was officially terminated with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in August of that year (Neofotistos 2004). This agreement has endured until the present day; however, there have still been frequent instances of tension between the two ethnic groups. For instance, if not for the US recognition of North Macedonia by its

³ The complete text can be found in

https://www.mfa.gr/images/docs/fyrom/resolution_unsc_817_1993.pdf (Retrieved 12 October 2019)

⁴ The complete text can be found in

https://www.mfa.gr/images/docs/fyrom/resolution_unsc_845_1993.pdf (Retrieved 12 October 2019)

⁵ The complete text of Prespes Agreement can be found in <https://vmacedonia.com/politics/macedonia-greece-agreement.html> (Retrieved 12 October 2019)

then constitutional name⁶, the country would probably have fallen apart due to a referendum organized by the World Macedonian Congress in 2004 (Deliso 2004).

It is worth saying that following the tension between Serbs from North Kosovo and Kosovo's police force when the Kosovo government ordered police to seize control of the two border crossings to enforce a ban on imports from Serbia in 2011, Ali Ahmeti leader of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI is the largest Albanian political party in the Republic of Macedonia, and the third largest political party in all of Macedonia) said on Macedonian Utrinski Vesnik daily *"If there are any attempts of changing the borders, I would not assume responsibility to be a guardian of the peace in Macedonia, since we would face a situation in which people start organising themselves just like in 1990, 1999 and 2001. If the situation goes out of control, no one could guarantee that the Albanians would not form a common front,"* (FOCUS Information Agency 2011)

Having in mind the first basic principle of Ohrid Framework Agreement, *"The use of violence in pursuit of political aims is rejected completely and unconditionally. Only peaceful political solutions can assure a stable and democratic future for Macedonia"*⁷ this intensification of tensions between the two major ethnic groups over the past years may be considered as a sign that the Ohrid agreement failed in its purpose and needs to be revised in order to act as a template for long-term state consolidation and democratization on the road to EU accession. But what can we say was the chain of events that has led us to this point?

The purpose of this research is not to see only the roots of nationalism in North Macedonia and how this led to an armed conflict in 2001 and to the signing of the Ohrid Framework agreement but also to examine whether the implementation of a consociation agreement such as the Ohrid Framework Agreement has worked in practice for the country and for the North Macedonian society. Almost twenty years from the signing of the Ohrid Framework agreement, can one say that the implementation of this agreement has created a functional multi-ethnic⁸ society in North Macedonia or not? Do we have the

⁶ Following the Prespes agreement in June 2018 between Greece and North Macedonia, North Macedonia changed its constitutional name from "Republic of Macedonia" that was in use from its independence in 1991 to "Republic of North Macedonia"

⁷ The complete text of Ohrid Framework Agreement can be found in <http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/filestore/Ohrid%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf> (Retrieved 12 October 2019)

⁸ In a multi-ethnic state, according to Eriksen, (Eriksen, 1992: 221) *"the state adopts an ideology of multi-nationalism, where citizen-ship does not have to imply a particular ethnic identity"*. Ethnicity primarily refers to group identity arising from a common history, language etc. Multi-ethnic, refers to members of a variety of ethnic groups interacting within a particular space - State. Such states require a common

creation and development of cross-cutting (as opposed to segmental) cleavages as Lijphart suggests (Lijphart 1977) or a divided country? But why North Macedonia, what is with this country that makes it special in comparison to other countries? The very interesting thing is that contrary to other cases in Europe where the Theory of Consociationalism was applied, North Macedonia was not an EU member like Northern Ireland, where we had the Good Friday Agreement nor did the international community appoint a High Representative (as in the case of Bosnia) to oversee the civilian implementation of the Dayton agreement. North Macedonia was a country that was more or less left alone without a strict and continuous supervision to implement the Ohrid Framework Agreement⁹.

In order to have a more rounded view, this research has been divided into three chapters, each one covering a different aspect. In combination, they provide all the information needed for covering this issue as completely as possible within the framework of an MPhil thesis in order to be able to have a safe conclusion to our question.

In the first chapter there is an attempt to tell the story from the beginning, meaning that there is an effort to present the roots of the conflict and the situation in North Macedonia before, during and after the 2001 crisis. For this reason, this chapter is being divided in three parts. In the first part we will have a small theoretical discussion about nationalism and how nationalism has found its way in North Macedonia first by having an idea how each of the two largest ethnic groups in the country (Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians) sees the other one and then how their relations have been influenced by their co-existence within Yugoslavia.

In the second part we will see how in North Macedonia from an island of peace after the dissolution of Yugoslavia reached a point where the 2001 conflict in the country became inevitable. For this we will examine the relations between the two different ethnic groups from the early days of the new Republic until the 2001 conflict itself. In the third part we will see the situation in the country in 2015. The year 2015 is important

structure or format with which all members agree to conform in order for this multi-ethnic interaction to function successfully.

⁹ Of course we are not forgetting the presence of OSCE in the country with the OSCE mission in Skopje whose mandate according to OSCE webpage is to monitor and support the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (<https://www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje/mandate>) but as the mandate specifically stresses OSCE's role in the country is mainly supportive. On the other hand even though North Macedonia has been included to the EU Stabilisation and Association Process and the North Macedonian government has been always stating North Macedonia's goal for EU and NATO membership, the Euro-Atlantic path was blocked due to the name dispute with Greece.

because first we need to see what the situation in the country was almost 15 years after the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement but mainly because it will help to see the background in which the research whose outcome will be presented in the third chapter took place.

The idea behind the second chapter is to equip the reader with the necessary theoretical background and analysis of consociationalism and of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. This is why this chapter is divided again in three parts. In the first part there is a brief discussion of the Theory of consociationalism and in the second part we have an analysis of the Ohrid Framework agreement based on the core principles of this theory. In the third part we will attempt a critical assessment of the Ohrid Framework Agreement based on what we have discussed before in the two previous parts.

The third chapter is the more statistical one since it is the chapter in which we will examine the outcome of a survey that took part in North Macedonia from February 2015 until May 2015. This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part it is important to see the research's methodology and also in what way the current research builds on previous work conducted by Ipsos in 2011 in North Macedonia within the framework of the project "Strategies of symbolic nation-building in West Balkan states¹⁰" that also led to the writing of the book "*Strategies of Symbolic Nation-building in South Eastern Europe*" edited by Pål Kolstø (Kolstø 2014). In the second part we will examine the outcome of the survey along with a discussion fueled by the current literature concerning the situation in North Macedonia and what was the outcome of the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

Finally in the conclusion we will try to sum up everything being discussed in the previous chapter in an effort to try and give a solid, sincere and accurate answer to the question we put before on whether the Ohrid Framework Agreement, or in other words if the way that consociationalism was practiced in North Macedonia, produced the expected results in terms of social peace and coherence.

¹⁰ More information on this project can be found in <https://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/research/projects/nation-w-balkan/>

... “If different cultural, ethnic, and religious subcultures are to coexist and interact on equal terms within the same political community, the majority culture must give up its historical prerogative to define the official terms of that generalized political culture which is to be shared by all citizens, regardless of where they come from and how they live... Such generalized political cultures have as their points of reference the national constitutions but each of them differently contextualizes the same universalistic principles, popular sovereignty and human rights from the perspective of its own particular history. On such a basis, nationalism can be replaced by...constitutional patriotism...” (Habermas, 1996: 286)

Chapter 1

Part 1 Nationalism and Ethnic Identities in North Macedonia

As already discussed briefly in the introduction, the aim of this chapter is to give the reader an idea of how North Macedonia from a success story in terms of being able to declare its independence from Yugoslavia without literally firing one shot came in 2001 one step away from dissolution.

In order to reach a safe conclusion it is crucial to conduct a narrow, comprehensive and spherical analysis of the social and political background on the relations between the two major ethnic groups in North Macedonia, Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians¹¹. Of great help in order to explain the origins of conflict between the two groups are the works on nationalism and on ethnic group mobilization of Rogers Brubaker, (Brubaker 1996, 2000, 2004) and Charles Tilly (Tilly 1992 and 1996).

A vital component of our research and to some point a key issue that in a way has fuelled the tension between the two major ethnic groups in North Macedonia is the image that each ethnic group has of itself and of the others. For instance, the Macedonian Albanians challenge the Macedonian Slav national identity (Sfetas et al 1995: 99-100). The Albanians say that the Bulgarian army was accepted as a liberator during the Second World War occupation, (Livanios 1995: 576-577) and only later, due to the perceived defeat of Bulgaria, the Macedonian Slavs joined the resistance, after being first recognized as an equal nation by Tito and the Partisans. Macedonian Albanians also consider themselves descendants of the ancient Illyrians (Mersini 2007: 57-58) so their

¹¹ In North Macedonia, Macedonian Slavs are simply referred to themselves as Macedonians and Macedonian Albanians simply as Albanians. Though in order to avoid confusions with ethnic groups from neighboring countries such as Albanians from Albania or Kosovo, we will use the terms Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians almost throughout the Thesis

prior appearance in the historic scene of the area, gives them more historical rights in relation to the Slavs (Serbs, Montenegrins and Macedonians).

On the other hand Macedonian Slavs mostly depending on their political background consider themselves either as straight descendants of the ancient Macedonians (Danforth 1997: 45-46) something that has been intensively promoted by VMRO-DPMNE political party and its supporters (Vangeli 2011: 13, Vangelov 2019) or as South Slavs something which is now, after the signing and ratification of Prespes agreement with Greece in 2018, specifically mentioned in the North Macedonian constitution. Either way, Macedonian Slavs with almost no exception see Macedonian Albanians simply as a mere remnant of the Ottoman occupation with no historic ties with the area or rights upon it (Georgievski 2009, Kofos 1994:23).

A close examination of all the facts and factors (such as collective memory narratives of history) mentioned above, could allow for an assessment of whether there is a possibility of a crisis and instability in North Macedonia in the future, as well as, the consequences such a development might hold for the country and the whole region.

Nationalism is an essential ingredient in binding together disparate people into a group called the nation. Nationalism is defined here as "an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of self-government and independence on behalf of a group, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential "nation" like others."(A. Smith, 1983: 171). Similar to this definition is the nation as a group of people who share a collective sentiment that features ties of history, culture, and common ancestry. (Kellas, 1991: 2) An ethnic group is a smaller group whose members hold attachments that are reciprocal, dependent on each other, and direct. Nations have members whose attachment to group identity is indirect and independent of attachment to other members of the group (Conover, 1998: 11-48). According to Ted Gurr, Ethnonationalism is the conflation of ethnicity into nationalism. It is exclusive in the sense that only members of the ethnic group are also members of the nation. It is potentially dangerous because members of minority groups are excluded. Exclusion may be ideational in orientation. For example, there is little mention of the minority group in the historical development of the nation; it may be economic, with members of the ethnic group economically marginalized; or it may be political, with minorities excluded from positions of power. When the number of ethnic minorities is small relatively to the total population, the repercussions are not great. The likelihood of conflict increases as the numbers of the minority ethnic population increase. (Gurr, 1993) Employing this logic, the implication across different groups, not identities, is that when ethnonationalism is on the rise, the groups which are not part of the ethnonational conception will mobilize against it (Zahariadis 2003: 263-4). It is obvious that external interventions (Such as the Name dispute of North Macedonia with Greece and the language and identity dispute of

Macedonian Slavs with Bulgaria) accelerate the process. Of course, a logical reaction is that when ethnonationalism is on the rise in response to a perceived external threat, the ethnic identity of minority groups in that state will also rise to counteract to the "loss" of identity space. The greater the intensity of the external threat, the greater the intensity of ethnonationalism and the stronger the mobilization of ethnic minorities will be.

In *Nationalism Reframed*, Brubaker describes the relationship between minorities who live outside the state that bears their name and the majority communities of the states the minorities live in. When a neighbouring state has a majority population that shares the same ethnicity and cultural/linguistic or historical ties with that minority community, the chance of minority issues affecting bilateral relations is relatively high, although not inevitable. This can further complicate intra-state relations between the minority and the majority as well as relations between the minority and its so-called kin-state. Brubaker describes this relationship as 'a triad linking national minorities, the newly nationalizing states in which they live, and the external national "homelands" to which they belong, or can be construed as belonging, by ethnocultural affinity though not legal citizenship' (Brubaker, 1996: 4). In looking at this relationship, one has to consider three relationships, all of which are inter-connected: kin-state and national minority; kin-state and home state; home state (majority population) and national minority. This is not a static relationship. The components of the nexus 'are linked by continuous mutual monitoring and inter-action. Moreover, the three "elements" in the triadic relation are themselves not fixed entities but fields of differentiated and competing positions, arenas of struggle among competing stances'. (Brubaker, 1996: 8) The shifting nature of this relationship is what makes it unstable and potentially explosive. (Brubaker, 1996: 8) Brubaker's triadic nexus provides a useful framework for looking at the relationship between so-called home states, kin-states and minorities, albeit as a type of short hand.

'Home state' is a relatively straight-forward term: it is the state where the minority lives. Usually persons belonging to national minorities are citizens of the home state. The home state is not necessarily the 'homeland' if minorities feel an affinity with a mother country that is not the state in which they reside. As Brubaker suggests, the state where the minority lives may be what he calls a 'nationalizing' state. By this he means new or newly reconfigured states that are 'ethnically heterogeneous yet conceived as nation-states, whose dominant elites promote (to varying degrees) the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, or political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation' (Brubaker 1995: 109). In such cases, civic society is undermined by ethnic hierarchy, which leads to discrimination and a feeling among minorities that they are not equal members of the state.

Like most of the other former republics of Yugoslavia, the Republic of North Macedonia has a complex multi-ethnic composition: according to 2002 census data,

Macedonian Slavs make up 64.1% (1.29 million) of the total population of 2.02 million, Macedonian Albanians 25.2% (509,083), Turks 3.8% (77,959), Roma 2.6% (53,879), Serbs 1.7% (35,939), 0.8% Bosnians (17,018) and Vlachs 0.4 % (9,695). Approximately 1% is classified as 'other ethnicities'¹². According to Paolo Masella ethnic diversity has a negative impact on economic development and political stability (Masella 2011: 437-8). A high level of ethnic fractionalization is often associated with low levels of investment and worse institutional quality; in countries with high levels of ethnic polarization, the probability of civil conflict is higher¹³. Is this opinion on ethnic diversity panacea? “Nation building” (policies that promote attachment to nation over ethnic and regional identities) has been proposed as an integration and conflict reduction mechanism. (Miguel, 2004: 327–362) documents the implementation of nation building reforms in the newly independent East African nations in the 1960s and 1970s. He focuses on the economic development of two countries: Tanzania and Kenya. Despite their similar colonial institutional legacy, ethnic makeup, and geographical conditions, the leaders of these two countries have adopted very different policies, especially with regard to ethnic groups, over a wide range of dimensions. Nyerere (Tanzania) followed a “Pan-Africanist” nation building policy and a centralized economic policy. (Miguel, 2004: 327–362) shows that nation building allowed diverse communities in Tanzania to achieve better economic outcomes than diverse communities in the Kenyan regions.

Macedonian Albanians, who reside primarily along the borders with Albania and Kosovo, form the largest, and the most problematic, ethnic group in North Macedonia (Ackermann 1996: 410). Because of their distinct cultural, religious, and social attributes, Macedonian Albanians have never been fully integrated into North Macedonian society and have been subjected to discrimination, especially throughout the 1980s (Perry 1997: 252).

The Macedonian Albanians live either in Skopje, or as stated also before in the western part of the country. The Macedonian Slavs are mostly urbanized, while the

¹² Classification and data from: Republic of Macedonia State Statistical office, *Total population, households and dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, Census 2002*, retrieved on 28/12/2013 from <http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/pxweb2007bazi/Database/Censuses/Census%20of%20population%202002/Census%20of%20population%202002.asp>

¹³ Mauro (1995), claims that ethnolinguistic diversity has a direct negative effect on the level of investment. Easterly and Levine (1997) find that a high level of ethnic fragmentation has a negative impact on economic growth. Montalvo and Reynal (2005) suggest that ethnic (and religious) polarization is one of the factors explaining economic development through its impact on the probability of civil wars. For a more accurate survey of the literature on the benefits and the costs of diversity, see Alesina and La Ferrara (2005)

Macedonian Albanians live mostly in rural areas. The majority of Macedonian Albanians are Muslim, with only a few Orthodox Christians living in villages around Lake Ohrid and Gostivar. In addition there are also a few Roman Catholic Macedonian Albanians in Skopje (Poulton 1995: 130). Authorities in the Republic of North Macedonia used to view Islam as a means of Albanian irredentism and also a tool to come close or even to assimilate other smaller groups (Koppa 2001: 41). It should be noted that in North Macedonia religious practices and oriental Islamic influences among Macedonian Albanians are more strong and noticeable than in Kosovo or even Albania. One of the main reasons for this is that in Yugoslavia, Kosovars were allowed to develop and promote their cultural identity, whereas in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Macedonian Albanians faced political restrictions and limitations to the expressions of their ethnic identity. For this reason the Macedonian Albanians turned to religion in order to keep their cultural identity and differentiation (Kofos 1998: 63-65). So if we could identify some basic differences between Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians which, added to other factors, make their coexistence even more difficult this would be: the differences between town/countryside, Christianity/Islam, and industry/agriculture. What is more surprising is that each language is identified with a particular type of activity and way of living (Koppa 2001: 43).

According to Pribichevich and Singleton, Ethnic tension between the two ethnic groups is an old phenomenon (Pribichevich 1982 and Singleton 1985). This tension has become more intensive particularly in the 1980s, parallel to the Kosovo riots of April 1981. Since then, because of the unrest Albanians started moving from the autonomous province of Kosovo to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. At that time the Albanians in Yugoslavia were straggling for the creation of an Albanian Federal Republic as an equal partner in the Yugoslav Federation and the introduction of the Albanian language at university level. From 1981 to 1989, there was an increasing tension between the Albanians and the local authorities. For the first time, we saw a process of 'ghettoization', with a parallel turn to Religion as a symbol of national separation between the Macedonian Albanians and the Slav Macedonians. (Kofos 1998). In mid-July 1987, the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia adopted a law that introduced as an 'ideal' the four-member family as an answer to the rising birth rate of the Macedonian Albanian Community in comparison to the Macedonian Slavs (Koppa 2001: 43). Meanwhile, due to the growing ethnic tension between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo (Binder 1987) thousands of Kosovars entered the small Republic, without being granted the right of permanent residence helping to raise as well the percentage of Macedonian Albanian minority. Two years later, in 1989, in a processes of ethnocultural

nationalization according to Brubaker¹⁴, the new Constitution of the Socialist Republic stated that '*the Republic of Macedonia is the national state of the Macedonian people*', removing the phrase '*and of the Albanian and Turkish nationality*' of the previous Constitution (Koppa 2001: 45). During the Yugoslav period, the Macedonian state had been defined in the Constitution as '*the national state of the Macedonian people*', and the state of the Albanian and Turkish nationalities in it, based on the sovereignty of the people¹⁵. For Macedonian Albanians, loyalty to the state depended mainly on the degree to which the civic definition overweighed the ethnic one, determining public policies and practices (Barnett and Center for Preventive Action Staff, 1996: 34).

The Slavic population of North Macedonia was recognized as a "nation" for the first time in the context of socialist Yugoslavia whereas the Socialist Republic of Macedonia which was its name at the time was recognized as an equal part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia¹⁶ (SFR Yugoslavia or SFRY). Albanians, within the framework of SFRY were considered as a "nationality" enjoying a fully recognized political, economic and ethnic status, which allowed them to participate in the public, political and economic life of socialist Yugoslavia¹⁷. The latter functioned as a

¹⁴ In his work Brubaker specifies the elements that characteristically involved in the politics and processes of ethnocultural nationalization. These are: (1) the existence (more precisely the conceived or understood or 'imagined' existence) of a 'core nation' or nationality, defined in ethnocultural terms, and sharply distinguished from the citizenry or permanent resident population of the state as a whole; (2) the idea that the nation legitimately 'owns' the polity, that the polity exists as the polity of and for the core nation; (3) the idea that the core nation is not flourishing, that its specific interests are not adequately 'realized' or 'expressed' despite its rightful 'ownership' of the state; (4) the idea that specific action is needed in a variety of settings and domains to promote the language, cultural flourishing, demographic predominance, economic welfare, and political hegemony of the core nation; (5) the conception and justification of such action as remedial or compensatory, as needed to counterbalance and correct for previous discrimination against the nation before it had 'its own' state to safeguard and promote its interests; (6) mobilization on the basis of these ideas in a variety of settings - legislatures, electoral campaigns, the press, associations, universities, the streets - in an effort to shape the policies or practices of the state, of particular organizations, agencies, or officials within the state, or of non-state organizations; and (7) the adoption - by the state, by particular state agencies and officials, and by non-state organizations - of policies and practices, formal and informal, that were informed by the ideas outlined above. (Brubaker, 1996: 415-416)

¹⁵ Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, 1974, preamble, retrieved on 13/11/2013 from <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/0AF2E0456C964935B7705FB5BF6F31F9.pdf>

¹⁶ Constitution of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1946), retrieved on 28/12/2013 from http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Yugoslavia_1946.txt

¹⁷ Legally, the term national minority was applied to the members of the nationalities of non-Yugoslav ethnic origins, left on the Yugoslav side of the border after World War One as a result of the Serbian

repressor of any hegemonic disposal by any older or stronger ethnic (e.g. Serbs) or language (Serbo-Croatian) group to any other smaller or less powerful. Especially in the form received after 1966, Yugoslav socialism rejected any possibility of promoting the creation of a supranational space of the Yugoslav federation. Based largely in terms Edvard Kardelj formulated in 1957, the Yugoslav State would be wrong to try and create a new nation. So, Yugoslavia was considered a safe haven for all existing separate national identities, where the weak and newer identities were protected from any outside interference and absorption (Edvard Kardelj 1979: 153-179).

Part 2 From the days of the New Republic until the 2001 conflict

The dissolution of SFRY and the proclamation of an independent North Macedonian state on September 8, 1991 brought to both Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians¹⁸ in the country mixed feelings. Macedonian Slavs which for the first time had their own independent state were fully aware of the difficulties that would come from neighbouring countries at the regional level and from the ethnic group of Macedonian Albanians within the state (Rizova 2011:81). For instance Bulgaria had not recognized them as a separate nation, and considered the "Macedonian"¹⁹ language as a dialect of Bulgarian; Serbia had not recognized the autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church, while Greece undermined the right to use the name of "Macedonia" by FYROM²⁰ (Rizova 2011: 74). Regarding the Macedonian Albanians, Macedonian Slavs always had the suspicion that Macedonian Albanians were not committed to a multi-ethnic state instead their ultimate goal was the secession of the Macedonian Albanian

victories in the Balkan Wars. In the first stage of development of the Yugoslav minorities' policy after World War Two, these groups were entitled only to cultural autonomy. Large groups as the Albanians and the Hungarians were also entitled to their autonomous regions of Kosovo and the Vojvodina staying, however, within the framework of the Socialist Republic of Serbia which, as mentioned earlier, acquired these regions prior to the formation of Yugoslavia in 1919.(Gasinski, 1980: 32)

¹⁸ As noted before, for distinguish purposes from other ethnic groups, the two major ethnic groups in the Republic of North Macedonia will be referred as Macedonian Slavs from one side and as Macedonian Albanians from the other side.

¹⁹ Macedonian Language refers on the language spoken by Macedonian Slavs whereas Albanian Language refers on the language spoken by the Macedonian Albanians.

²⁰ F.Y.R.O.M.: Former Yugoslavic Republic of Macedonia (the name under which republic of Macedonia became a member of the United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/47/225 of 8 April 1993) .

regions of North Macedonia and its evolution into a federal state or even to be a part of a Greater Albania (Ackermann 1996: 412).

Macedonian Albanians on the other hand, felt that they were in a better place in relation to the Kosovo Albanians (Perry 1994: 37), who remained under Serbian administration, since they believed that they had better chances to be recognized as having equal rights as North Macedonian citizens. However, the new international border between Yugoslavia and North Macedonia was putting obstacles to the communication between Macedonian Albanians and their brothers of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo (Daskalovski 2004:51). In addition, the referendum on Independence's question of the 8th of September ("*Are you for a sovereign and independent state of Macedonia, with a right to enter into any alliance with sovereign states of Yugoslavia?*") was interpreted by Macedonian Albanians as an effort by the North Macedonian Government towards an upcoming inter-ethnic cohabitation with other post Yugoslavic republics. In this way to the possibility of a federal type reunification with Yugoslavia and potential re-location of the Macedonian Albanians under Serbian control remained open. Such a perspective created discomfort among the Macedonian Albanians, mainly due to the repressive policies of Belgrade towards Kosovo Albanians. Macedonian Albanians believed that the referendum's question should give an answer upon the relations between the different ethnic groups within the new state (Sulejmani 2008: 134-138). Prior to the referendum, the leadership of the leading Macedonian Albanian political party at the time, PDP²¹, had issued a Declaration for "an equal status of Albanians in Macedonia". According to the Declaration, the Macedonian Albanian participation in the referendum would depend on the extent to which the Macedonian Slav side would consider the Macedonian Albanian Declaration for equality within North Macedonia (Engstrom 2002: 4).

The outcome was that Macedonian Albanians boycotted the referendum on independence - not because they objected to it, but because they feared that their rights would not be respected under the constitution of 1991 (Zahariadis 2003: 268). In addition during 1992 Nevzat Halili the moderate leader of the PDP at the time originating from Tetovo organized in western North Macedonia an unofficial referendum on political and regional independence which demonstrated that 90% supported independence from North Macedonia (Rizova 2011:81). Halili justified the referendum by explaining: "*the state recognition of Macedonia is premature, as the rights of our minority in this country are trampled underfoot.*" (Reuter 1999: 35). Following the results of the Macedonian

²¹ In December 1990, the first free multiparty elections were held in North Macedonia since 1938. In the elections, the ethnic Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) won 25 out of 120 seats in the North Macedonian National Assembly (Tatiana P. Rizova 2011: 74)

Albanian referendum activist groups within the community under Nevzat Halili declared in the western part of the Republic of North Macedonia the autonomous republic of “Illyrida” with Tetovo as new Capital. However, Macedonian Albanians renounced any violent activity, even though there were strong voices among them who were calling for an armed confrontation (Sfetas and Kentrotis 1995: 121-122).

Macedonian Albanian point of view

The constitutional issue became a serious point in the inter-ethnic relations in the new Republic since from the Macedonian Albanian point of view the constitution relegated them to an inferior status vis-à-vis the majority. Macedonian Albanians complained of the “tyranny of the Macedonian majority.” (Reka 2008: 57) This act furthermore felt like a clear downgrading of Macedonian Albanian constitutional status since the 1974 Constitution of Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) had granted them (as well as Turks) constitutional equality with the Macedonian Slavs²². Apparently, they were expecting from democracy more rights than they had enjoyed in the mono-party system, so the Macedonian Albanian parties did not vote for the Constitution (Maleska 2002: 167).

The Preamble to the 1991 Constitution determined the following majority-minorities relationship:

“...Taking as the points of departure the historical, cultural, spiritual and statehood heritage of the Macedonian people and their struggle over centuries for national and social freedom as well as the creation of their own state, and particularly the traditions of statehood and legality of the Krushevo Republic and the historic decisions of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the People's Liberation of Macedonia, together with the constitutional and legal continuity of the Macedonian state as a sovereign republic within Federal Yugoslavia and freely manifested will of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia in the referendum of September 8th, 1991, as well as the historical fact that Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people²³, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the

²² Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, 1974, preamble, retrieved on 13/11/2013 from <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/0AF2E0456C964935B7705FB5BF6F31F9.pdf>

²³ The underlining is of the researcher

Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanics and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia, and intent on:

- *the establishment of the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign and independent state, as well as a civil and democratic one;*
- *the establishment and consolidation of the rule of law as a fundamental system of government;*
- *the guaranteeing of human rights, citizens' freedoms and ethnic equality;*
- *the provision of peace and a common home for the Macedonian people with the nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia ...*²⁴

The Preamble of the Constitution, while professing to uphold equality among its citizens, symbolically establishes a hierarchy of ethnicities assigning Macedonians state ownership. Zhidas Daskalovski describes below the ethnic “pecking order”: Symbolically then we have a classification of people into three categories, the Macedonian Slavs as the primary bearers of the right to the state, the members of the four mentioned minorities as people with equal rights but not being the primary claimants to the right to the state, and the members of the nations not even mentioned in the Preamble specified as others (Daskalovski 2002:15). This odd hybrid Text, combining civic ambitions with a mono-ethnic character was described within the Macedonian Albanian community as a generator of crisis in the country (Mehmeti, 1997). In addition, the 1991 Constitution in contrast to the 1974 Constitution of SFRY was denying Macedonian Albanians their right to university education in their native language and declared Macedonian written in the Cyrillic alphabet as the only official language in the North Macedonia²⁵. In addition the Constitution was establishing a symbolic supremacy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church

²⁴ Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, 1991, preamble, retrieved on 13/11/2013 from <http://www.hri.org/docs/fyrom/fyrom-const.html#Preamble>

²⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 1991, Article 7: *“The Macedonian language, written using its Cyrillic alphabet, is the official language in the Republic of Macedonia. In the units of local self-government where the majority of the inhabitants belong to a nationality, in addition to the Macedonian language and Cyrillic alphabet, their language and alphabet are also in official use, in a manner determined by law”*.

Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 1991, Article 48: *“Members of the nationalities have the right to instruction in their language in primary and secondary education, as determined by law. In schools where education is carried out in the language of a nationality, the Macedonian language is also studied”*.
retrieved on 13/11/2013 from <http://www.hri.org/docs/fyrom/fyrom-const.html#Preamble>

over other religious communities²⁶. Article 19 of the Constitution by referring to “*the Macedonian Orthodox Church and other religious communities and groups*,” symbolically ranked the Macedonian Orthodox Church higher, or at least as enjoying a special status within the new country in relation to the Muslim, Catholic and other religious communities.

As mentioned above Macedonian Albanians were not satisfied with the constitutional solutions, which were obviously below the level of what has been promised to them in the political process preceding the Constitution. Macedonian Albanians demanded a redefinition of their constitutional status, full recognition of their right to use the Albanian language, the right to be educated in their language, a proportional representation in the public sector, especially the security forces, and greater autonomy to the local governments (Ortakovski, 2001: 34). These views were also expressed on December of 1991 by the PDP in a letter sent to the EU Council of Ministers and the Arbitration Committee of the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia at the Hague. A letter which stated the differences between the two major ethnic groups as far it concerns their aims, values and their political culture (Rizvan, 2008: 138).

Another action that brought unrest to the Macedonian Albanian side and lead to serious clashes with the police was the new Law on Citizenship on December 3rd 1992²⁷ (Koppa 2001: 44). According to this law, individuals that had not legally and continuously lived in the Republic for at least 15 years did not have the right to acquire citizenship. This provision only excluded tens of thousands Albanian refugees who came to North Macedonia from Kosovo in the 1980s and early 1990s. The time requirement of the new law was affecting, the Macedonian Albanians as well, since the Albanians in Yugoslavia used to move freely from the Socialist Republic of Macedonia to the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and vice versa. Furthermore this law excluded inhabitants of North Macedonia who had been long term residents of other parts of Yugoslavia, such as the Turks and Roma, who used to move constantly in search for work. Exclusion from the right of citizenship meant also exclusion from political and social processes, denial of representation and land ownership (Holliday, 2005: 135). The

²⁶ Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 1991, Article 19: “*The Macedonian Orthodox Church and other religious communities and groups are free to establish schools and other social and charitable institutions, by ways of a procedure regulated by law*”. retrieved on 10/12/2013 from <http://www.hri.org/docs/fyrom/fyrom-const.html#Preamble>

²⁷ Law on Citizenship of the Republic of North Macedonia, 1992, retrieved on 13/11/2013 from <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=category&category=LEGAL&publisher=&type=&coi=MKD&docid=3f54916b4&skip=0>

most irritating part of the new law for Macedonian Albanians, was article 11 which provided citizenship to Macedonian Slavs regardless of their place of birth²⁸. Macedonian Albanians demanded that the required year limit is reduced to five years, while the request was accompanied by threats of social unrest if their demand was not taken into account by the Government of the country (Caplan, 1992: 725). On April 8th, 1993, North Macedonia was admitted to the United Nations, with a provision that it was to be referred to as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia within the auspices of the UN, and that it has to work for a solution to the 'name dispute' with Greece so the North Macedonian parliament met to vote on the issue. Because of the government's refusal to reduce the time limit needed for acquiring citizenship PDP-NDP boycotted the session stating that North Macedonia could not receive international recognition until the country's record, in respect to the Macedonian Albanian minority, 'improves significantly' (Daskalovski, 2004:57).

A major issue in the relation between the two ethnic groups was the issue of higher education. Even though after the initial drop in the number of Macedonian Albanians in secondary education in the early 1990s, measures were instituted to improve the situation, the issue of higher education in Albanian was left unaddressed (Ilievski, 2007: 7). In addition, some Macedonian Albanians who had received higher education and could not find work in Kosovo, returned to North Macedonia, where they found themselves locked up in an uneasy face-to-face with the Macedonian Slavs. Confrontation grew since diplomas from Pristina University were not recognized by North Macedonian authorities, as well as those degrees later obtained in Tirana. Local Macedonian Albanians thus tended to be excluded from North Macedonian state administration and public enterprises (Ragaru, 2008: 7). A Macedonian Albanian effort at solving the higher education issue through the launch of a private Albanian-language university was made in Mala Recica (near Tetovo) in 1994. This effort was harshly opposed by the North Macedonian government who feared that the new university might turn into a forum of national radicalism (as the University of Pristina was perceived to have done). (Ragaru, 2008: 8).

²⁸ Law on Citizenship of the Republic of North Macedonia, 1992, article 11:

"Upon exception of Article 7 of this law, an alien who has reached 18 years of age may acquire citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia by naturalization, if that is of a special scientific, economic, cultural, and national interest, and that particularly for all Macedonians by origin who live outside the borders of the Republic of Macedonia". retrieved on 13/11/2013 from <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=category&category=LEGAL&publisher=&type=&coi=MKD&docid=3f54916b4&skip=0>

The government under Branko Crvenkovski, then prime minister and president of SDSM refused the Macedonian Albanian request as being unconstitutional and attempted to close the University. The Macedonian Albanians went forward with the plan despite government opposition which led to clashes with the police. The most intensive clashes took place on February 17th 1995 which had as a result the death of one Macedonian Albanian and the injury of 20 others. The rector and five other local officials were arrested and later charged with, “inciting people to resist the police, preventing the police from exercising their duties, and illegal possession of weapons” (United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services). According to Helen Smith of the London newspaper *The Observer* “Interethnic animosity heightened with the arrest on Saturday of Fadii Sulejmani, the university's rector, who said *“the Albanians would defend the institution with “guns and grenades” if the government insisted on closing it”*.(Smith, 1995, Feb 20)

One could argue that the inauguration of the Albanian University in Tetovo, and the events that followed February 17th 1995, were essentially political activism but they were something more. They were symbolic actions in the framework of a broader activity for establishing a parallel system of power, which was symbolizing the political and cultural autonomy of Macedonian Albanians in western North Macedonia. Thus the government was unable to prevent the university from opening. The University incident, followed by clashes between Macedonian Albanians and the police, raised fears that an ethnic confrontation was imminent, nevertheless both communities were really careful not to let the situation get out of hand (Koppa 2001: 51).

To sum up the above according to Alice Ackermann (Ackermann 1996: 411), four distinct grievances drove the conflict between Macedonians Slavs and Macedonian Albanians:

- (1) Group status: Macedonian Albanians protested their status as a minority group, particularly since the preamble to the constitution declared North Macedonia the national state of the Macedonian people, where Albanians and other nationalities have equal status as citizens. Instead, Macedonian Albanians demanded to be recognized as a constitutive nation and insisted that the constitution provided them with territorial autonomy.
- (2) Language rights: Article 7 of the North Macedonian Constitution specified Macedonian as the official language, but Macedonian Albanians sought recognition of Albanian as an official language. Macedonian Albanians had also argued that the accommodative approach - which Article 7 reflected by mandating that at the level of local self-government, where there is a 'majority' or a 'considerable number of inhabitants belonging to a nationality', the language and

alphabet of that nationality can be used as an official language in addition to Macedonian- was ineffective.

- (3) Educational rights: Although education in Albanian was guaranteed at the primary and secondary school levels, Macedonian Albanians demanded their own Albanian-language university. This demand largely reflected concerns over the lack of training institutions for Albanian teachers, but also the need for a centre of cultural autonomy (one existed in the former Yugoslavia; Albanians had their own university in Kosovo's capital, Pristina). Because the government remained unyielding on this demand, it created tensions continually.
- (4) Discriminatory practices: Macedonian Albanians were underrepresented in the armed forces, the police, the legal profession, higher administration, and politics. For example, despite concerted efforts of the government to employ more Macedonian Albanians, they made up only 4 % of the police force and only 7% of military personnel.

The Macedonian Slav Side

Hardly any other country in Europe is probably regarded by its neighbours as much of an imposition as the Republic of North Macedonia (Wieland, 2001: 1-3). Until fairly recently, the country could not conclude any treaties with Bulgaria because Bulgaria did not accept Macedonian as a proper language. It is true that Bulgaria was among the first states to officially recognize the Republic of North Macedonia, but it denies the existence of a Macedonian nation and it considers its inhabitants to be Bulgarian. Greece on the other hand until 2018 and the Prespes agreement was speaking about “a brutal rape of history” and was blaming North Macedonia for confiscating the historic regional term of Macedonia for its own Hellenistic national project. (Perry 1994: 37). From the early days of North Macedonian independence, the government in Skopje has tried to find its place in the world but also to stabilize the situation with a policy of “equal-distance” towards all its neighbours. The North Macedonian government has taken all opportunities to protect the republic from challenges to its external legitimacy. To demonstrate the belief that the Bulgarian and Macedonian languages are distinct, former North Macedonian Prime Minister Crvenkovski used an interpreter in June 1993 when the Bulgarian Prime Minister Berov visited him in Skopje (Poulton, 2000: 215)

The domestic political situation was equally tricky. In North Macedonia, both sides Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians blamed each other for using history as a vehicle for perpetuating ethnic antagonisms (Kofos, 1998: 43-98). Macedonian Slav

as well as Macedonian Albanian historiography is in fact a selective and abusive re-reading of medieval history. According to Koppa, the historic past defines the image of the 'other' (Albanian or Slav) as an intruder. In fact we are watching a complete instrumentalization of ethnic identity and a strategic reinvention of collective identities in a new setting (Koppa 2001: 45). Intellectuals invented - or reinvented – tradition and history until all this reached the population that supported the emancipation movement. As a matter of fact, nations need usable pasts, (A. Smith, 1997: 36-59) their uses being largely determined by the needs, strategies and desire of the present-day elites of the minority or of the majority group.

Under this prism, the actions of the Macedonian Slav majority towards Macedonian Albanians could be interpreted if we consider two factors. Firstly as we said before there was the unbalanced demographic growth of the Macedonian Albanian minority in relation to the dominant Macedonian Slav. The increase of Macedonian Albanians was primarily due to two reasons: Mainly it was the result of the higher birth rate of Macedonian Albanians, and there was also the movement of Albanian population into Macedonia, both from the independent province of Kosovo because of the conflict with the Serbs but also from Albania, especially after the tense environment in the country after 1997 (Balalovska, 2002). Secondly there was a widespread suspicion among Macedonian Slavs that the ultimate objective of the Macedonian Albanians was their autonomy or secession from the state, a suspicion fuelled since the days of the Socialist Republic of "Macedonia" not only because of the protests of 1968²⁹ and the ethnic mobilization from and to Kosovo but also because of the request for uniting all the Albanian territories establishing a seventh republic in the Yugoslav Federation (Poulton, 1995: 122) It has been also said that the strategy of the Albanians in Macedonia since the country's independence was to build an Axis between Pristina - Tirana - Tetovo / Skopje (Maleska, 2002: 167).

In the early 1990s, Albanian Pascal Milo, later Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, had stated that there were two main priorities of the Albanian policy. The first was the establishment of a system of confederation, federation or autonomy for the Albanians in North Macedonia and the second a favourable agreement with Greece about the Albanians of Chameria³⁰ (Maleska, 2002: 167). In addition, it was rumoured

²⁹ In 1968 in Kosovo Albanians protested against Serbian dominance where, for the first time, officially demanded a Kosova - Republika (Kosovo Republic). These led to sympathy protests in Tetovo demanding that predominantly Albanian areas of North Macedonia be allowed to unite with Kosovo in a republic (Phillips, 2004: 44-45).

³⁰ The Chams are understood as members of the Albanian-speaking Muslim minority which used to live predominately in northwestern Greece (Epirus), in an area which today is called Thesprotia in Greek and

especially among Macedonian Slavic population that Macedonian Albanians strongly believed that their autonomy would later lead to the clustering of all Albanians into a single unified Albanian territory (Vickers and Pettifer, 1997: 189).

In addition to the above in 1993 inside the Macedonian Albanian party PDP began to occur, the first interethnic dissents within the Albanian ethnic group. Within the Party emerged a new generation of politician with some extreme beliefs, who had the support of the then Albanian President Sali Berisha. These young politicians accused the party of making multiple compromises, indifferent to the real interests of the Macedonian Albanians and raised the issue of a separate Albanian state in North Macedonia (Eldridge, 2002: 54). Arguably one of most influential ethnic Albanian politicians in Macedonia, if not the region, has been Arben Xhaferi (Dzhaferi). Xhaferi sensed early that he could exploit the country's ethnic differences in an effort to establish his own power base. In 1994 he split from the mainstream ethnic Albanian political party, the Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) and created his own party, the Party for Democratic Prosperity of Albanians (PDPA). In 1997, Xhaferi's PDPA merged with the Democratic People's Party and became the Democratic Party of Albanians, or DPA. (Eldridge, 2002: 54) Though he radicalized ethnic Albanian political demands and argued initially for a separate Albanian state in North Macedonia, he prudently restrained the militant elements of North Macedonia's ethnic Albanian community during the Kosovo crisis and helped limit that conflict. Xhaferi ultimately modified his message, no longer advocated the partition of North Macedonia or pan-Albanian unification. (ICG Balkans Report, 2000: 4-5).

In 1997, Mohamed Halili, as a representative of the Albanian Committee in the House, called for the reorganization of North Macedonia according to the Belgian model of the two *Länder*, while the same sentence and was repeated by Arben Xaferi, in mid-1998 (Kerin Hope, 2001). Finally, what made quite an impression on the Macedonian Slav community, was the decision of Albanian linguists, from Kosovo, North Macedonia and Montenegro to establish a single system of writing for all Albanian schools in the Balkans, an initiative also interpreted by the Macedonian Slav leadership as proposal to achieve the ultimate goal of creating a "Greater Albania." (Belamaric, 2003:26)

As Michael Walzer stresses, *'among histories and cultures the nation-state is not neutral; its political apparatus is an engine for national reproduction'* (Walzer, 1997:25). This can take especially violent forms in new states with fragile national identities, like the case of the North Macedonian state and the Macedonian Slavs (Koppa 2001: 45). In

Chameria in Albanian (as well as in seven villages on the Albanian side of the border. The Secret Past of the Greek-Albanian Borderlands. Cham Muslim, (Kretsi, 2002: 173).

multi-ethnic states and in North Macedonia in particular, citizens tend to identify with members of their own nation, since ethnic identity dominates everything else in the country. Under these circumstances, all social problems are expressed in terms of an interethnic conflict. From the above account, we have been witnessing a gradual polarization of every aspect of everyday life in North Macedonia, which was at the expense of democratization and the creation of a civic state³¹. In North Macedonia even before its birth we have witnessed a fragmented society with major tensions around the formation of a new political identity and political institutions that conflict with the interests of the Macedonian Albanian population since Macedonian Slav nationalists could not include Macedonian Albanians in their 'imagined community' (Lumsden, 1998: 8-9).

To sum up the two sides, according to Zhidas Daskalovski (Daskalovski, 2008: 273-276), during the 1990s the Macedonian Slav political elite clashed with their Macedonian Albanian counterparts over the basic idea behind the concept of the state. Various key points in the constitution, things like the census, the laws on education, local self-government, the public display of national minority symbols and the ethnic make-up of the police and army, as well as the public administration, during this period were all questioned by Macedonian Albanians. These are all constitutive elements of the idea behind the North Macedonian Republic, the fundamentals of which are accepted in all liberal states by the general public, or at least by the principal groups.

According to Janos Kis, Justice in liberal and ethnically heterogeneous states is provided if the state is not understood as a 'nation state.' In an ethnically divided society:

"...The state which treats every citizen as an equal cannot be a nation state: it must be a co-nation state. It cannot be identified with a single favoured nation but must consider the political community of all the ethnic groups living on its territory as constituting it. It should recognize all of their cultures and all of their traditions as its own. It should notice that the various ethnic groups contend with unequal initial chances for official recognition and a share of public authority, and it should offer particular assistance to the members of disadvantaged groups in approaching a position of equality. The privileges which are meant to countervail the initial disadvantages are inevitably lasting and they might need to be expressed as rights..." (Kis, 1996: 224).

³¹ According to Stilz "Civic nationhood is meant to describe a political identity built around shared citizenship in a liberal-democratic state. A civic nation - state in this sense, need not be unified by commonalities of language or culture. It simply requires a disposition on the part of citizens to uphold their political institutions, and to accept the liberal principles on which they are based. Membership is open to anyone who shares these values" (Stilz, 2009: 257).

“...A plural state is more legitimate the more all its citizens and not only the majority consider the territory of the state to be their own homeland, the more they all accept the legal system of the state and its institutions and the insignia of the state as their own symbols” (Daskalovski, 2008: 277).

“...The political community becomes monocultural (a single nation community) if it is created in competition and strife between ethnic groups living on the same territory in such a way that one group succeeds in taking possession of the state. The political community will be multicultural if it is formed from a union of ethnic groups living together. Its official symbols, holidays, its cultural goods handed down in school, and its historical remembrance will absorb something from the tradition of all the ethnic groups belonging to it, so that everyone can see the state is also theirs: likewise, everyone can see that the state is not their exclusive possession but is held jointly with the other ethnic groups forming it...” (Kis, 1996: 237)

In this context the demands by the Macedonian Albanians can be interpreted as wanting just such a union. Indeed, when one looks at the claims put forward by political representatives of Macedonian Albanians one could find many points which are well suited just to a framework of relations in a multi-ethnic state (Daskalovski, 2008: 278). As mentioned above the key demands of the Macedonian Albanians were: reform of the constitution, greater representation of Macedonian Albanians in the civil service, provision of university education in the Albanian language and decentralization of state power.

Certainly, reforms have been enacted and improvements made as participation by the Macedonian Albanians in the civic sector has risen in recent years. Similarly, a law was passed allowing private education in other languages than Macedonian, while a European financed trilingual university (Albanian, English and Macedonian) named Southeast Europe University was opened in 2001 in the city of Tetovo. However, these changes have not been sufficient to satisfy the political parties of the Albanians in Macedonia.

While Macedonian Slavs insist on a unitary nation state, Macedonian Albanians have refused to be considered as a minority in a unitary Macedonian Slav nation state and have advocated official binationalism. (Daskalovski, 2008: 275) Under such circumstances political transformation was formulated as a zero sum game, pitting ethnic Macedonian Albanian grievances against Macedonian Slav's fears for 'their' country's security and integrity (Varvarousis, 1998: 80).

The road towards an Armed Conflict.

The deterioration of the situation in Kosovo in 1998 and NATO's response early the following year “administered another jolt to North Macedonia's precarious equilibrium” (Fraser, 2002: 356). The war in Kosovo in 1999 brought to the surface two issues that could lead to an open interethnic warfare (Zahariadis 2003: 272-3). Firstly, it served as a model of how to bring in outside powers on the side of the Albanian cause. Secondly Tens of thousands of Kosovo Albanian refugees fled to North Macedonia, many of them staying with relatives or friends and thus avoiding the formal designation of refugees. The last thing Macedonian Slavs felt they needed was a sudden or substantial influx of ethnic Albanians who might just decide to stay. (Fraser 2002: 357). There is a rich literature on the impact of external conflict spilling over across borders (Most, 1980: 932-946). Much of this so-called contagion hypothesis focuses on two mechanisms that facilitate spill over. First, it is argued that conflict in neighbouring lands is due to the strains on resources posed by incoming refugees (Zahariadis 2003: 272-3). This was one of the reasons for the founding president of North Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov, to propose the establishing of a corridor through which fleeing Kosovo Albanians could safely bypass North Macedonia to refuge somewhere else in the world (Fraser 2002: 357).

The Kosovo crisis greatly influenced the country and, as Timothy Garton Ash argues, “...*North Macedonia was shaken to its foundations by this war...*” (Garton Ash, 1999: 4-7). As Koppa Mentioned, North Macedonia's economy was in shock due to the Kosovo crisis, as 20% of its exports went to Serbia and more than that depended on the trade routes through Serbia (Maria-Eleni Koppa (2001: 52-53). OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, Fortnightly Report emphasized that by 8 May 1999, a total of 235,300 refugees had arrived in North Macedonia since the beginning of NATO air strikes on 24 March 1999 – approximately 11 times the ceiling set by the government in February and more than 10% of North Macedonia's population (OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, Fortnightly Report). The government was struggling between the heavy pressure from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and its awareness of the deep-rooted fear amongst Macedonian Slavs that Albanians soon would become the majority in the North Macedonia. However, luckily the refugee question did not become explosive as most of the refugees left the country during summer 1999 (Koppa 2001: 52-53).

During the period following the end of war in Kosovo, the balance in North Macedonia has been unstable. The main fear of Macedonian Slavs was the dissolution of their state by the Macedonian Albanian efforts to gain equal status in the country while preserving their language, culture and religion, something that would - according to them - lead to autonomy and secession. The escalation of violence during 1999 and 2000 was certainly not a good sign (Koppa 2001: 55-56). As James Pettifer noted, “*Albanians are seen as having a practical veto over the future of the state*” (Pettifer, 1999: 138). On

January 7th 1998, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) publicly announced that the war was transferred to 'zone 2', that was considered to be the Republic of North Macedonia. In February 1998, an explosion in the city of Gostivar destroyed the shop of a Macedonian Albanian who had maintained good relations with the North Macedonian authorities. (Chiclet, 1999)

One of the main causes related to the armed conflict in North Macedonia in 2001 was the security gap which was resulted from the withdrawal of the UNPREDEP troops in 1999. These troops were until then guarding the northern border area of the country. The North Macedonian security forces could not get there in time to fill the gap since the matter of mapping North Macedonia's border with Yugoslavia was still pending. Thus, a large part of the northern border area remained unattended and an area unattended was undoubtedly the ideal case for the development of illegal activities (Rusi, 2002) Smuggling was not, of course, new to the area. When the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) official spokesperson said that the ultimate goal was 'no borders between Albanians,' he was thought to have been referring to a 'Greater Albania and was presumably told not to say it again (at any rate, he never did). The KLA leadership knew perfectly well what their putative allies in the international community did not want to hear. What the spokesperson may have meant was simply that orders should not apply to Albanians. They wanted the total freedom of movement that they had last enjoyed in Ottoman times. (Fraser, 2002: 356). A freedom which allowed KLA to enter North Macedonia fully armed and ready for action.

In March 2001, Albanian fighters of the 'National Liberation Army' occupied Tanusevci, a small village in North Macedonia near the borders with Kosovo, whereas Macedonian Albanian radicals organized gatherings in most western towns of the country, claiming themselves to be a federal organization of the state. In the following months, the NLA took control of large areas of the country. Meanwhile, unidentified groups destroyed some properties of Macedonian Albanians in the western part of the country. North Macedonia was sinking in crisis with a serious possibility this crisis to be transformed to a civil war as neither Macedonian Albanians nor Macedonian Slavs had been converted to the belief in a 'civic' settlement that would strengthen democracy by improving minority conditions without weakening the integrity of the state. Nor had separatists from each side given up their conviction that security for their communities could only be achieved by separating their territories (Koppa 2001: 56-57). The armed conflict escalated quickly during spring and summer 2001, and there were reports of fighting intense in the Tetovo, Nikustak, Kumanovo areas, as well as in the Radusa area where the North Macedonian forces deployed artillery and mortar shelling, supported by helicopter gunships. Although a new government was formed, under President Boris

Trajkovski with Ljubčo Georgievski as prime minister, with the participation of all major political parties from both ethnic groups, there was a hardening of positions on both sides that made dialogue very difficult to achieve.

From one hand the rebels claimed to be defending against the North Macedonian security forces and to be fighting for Albanian national rights in the country. (Koppa 2001: 55-56). On the other hand the activities of the NLA undoubtedly damaged the reputation of Macedonian Albanians as an ethnic group in North Macedonia. Many Macedonian Slavs consider Albanians to be terrorists. The Macedonian Slavs traditionally feared the pan-Albanian ambitions of the Macedonian Albanian population. The emergence of the NLA reinforced the enemy stereotypes through which Macedonian Albanians and Macedonian Slavs sought empowerment (Rizova 2011:83).

Finally, efforts by the EU High Representative for Macedonia, Xavier Solana, and President Trajkovski, led after weeks of very difficult negotiations to the signing of a Framework Agreement between the leaders of the legal Albanian parties (Xhaferi and Imeri) and the major Macedonian Slav parties (Georgievski and Crvenkovski). Francois Leotard, Special Representative of the EU and James Pardew, Special Representative of the USA, witnessed the signing of the Agreement. The NLA did not participate in the negotiations but remained an 'invisible actor' during the whole time of the negotiations. Clearly, no agreement could have any validity if it were not accepted by the NLA. The Framework Agreement is a highly balanced document, filled with many compromises on both sides. However, one should keep in mind that negotiations were held under the imminent risk of secession.

If from what has been mentioned before we could identify a lack of trust between the two major ethnic communities in the Republic of North Macedonia, a further analysis of the 2001 conflict with the use of game theory tools could reflect the inevitability of the conflict. According to Varvarousis, (Varvarousis, 1988: 88-90) the 2001 crisis was an implementation of the game of "coward". There the Macedonian Slav side appears to be interested in defending and safeguarding the status quo and the Macedonian Albanian offensive seeks to overturn the status quo. The main concern of the "defender" is how to prevent or repel challenges that would contribute to changing the status quo against him. The contrary objective of the "aggressor" is to force the defender to retreat or make concessions

This situation is perfectly illustrated in the Table³² below

Table 1, 2001 Crisis game theory

| | | Macedonian Albanians | |
|---------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| | | Consensus | Challenge |
| Slav Macedonians | Consensus | A (3,3) | B (1,4) |
| | Resistance | C (4,1) | D (-1, -1) |

A: Granting privileges to the Albanians

B: The autonomy of the Albanians

C: Maintenance of the current status quo

D: Civil war

The best result for the defender comes to choosing the strategy of "resistance", while for the attacker with the strategy "provocation." But the combination of these two strategies gives the worst possible outcome. From the above we see clearly why the choice of each of the parties was to escalate the crisis.

On a similar approach, Zartman (1995) points out that due to their zero-sum nature internal wars are less prone to negotiated settlements than inter-state wars. Negotiations favour the rebels since it forces the government to recognize them as equal and legitimate negotiation partners. Governments are therefore reluctant to commence talks as it removes their privileged position.

Part 3 The Situation in North Macedonia in Spring 2015

Following our analysis on the 2001 crisis it might look strange why in this part we will attempt a quite big leap in time from the 2001 crisis to North Macedonia in 2015. Of course the period of time between 2001 and 2015 is not of less importance, on the contrary in the next chapter while we will be discussing about the implementation of the

³² This table is an adjustment to the North Macedonian crisis of the table of Varvarousis (Varvarousis, 1988: 89)

Ohrid Framework Agreement we will also focus on some key moments or incidents that occurred between 2001 and 2015. It is very important for this Thesis to have a closer look on the situation in North Macedonia during 2015. This is mainly for two reasons. Fourteen years of operation of the Agreement seems enough time to have an assessment of the effectiveness of the 2001 settlement by my research in 2015 but also and most importantly it is crucial for the reader to have an idea on what was the situation and the political background in the country during the time that the survey whose results we are going to analyse in chapter three took place. As we will see in more detail in chapter three, the research took place in North Macedonia between February and May 2015. Although the data analysis in chapter three will give a clearer view of the situation in the country at the time, it is always good to have as much information as possible.

After the April 2014 elections in which the then ruling conservative VMRO-DPMNE party of Gruevski defeated Zoran Zaev's SDSM for a fourth consecutive time, the political scene in North Macedonia became extremely polarized (MacDowall, 2015). Zoran Zaev stated openly that the elections had been fraudulent and accused pr-stvPrime Minister Gruevski of operating a "dictatorship"³³. Following that, the SDSM abstained from the newly elected parliament.

Furthermore, Zoran Zaev, released what he has called "bombs" due to their "explosive content" and their possible effects in the local political scene against the government. These 'Bombs' were a series of allegedly wiretapped conversations of the prime minister, Nikola Gruevski, the head of the secret service and other senior officials, in which they were apparently discussing interference in the judiciary, media and urban-planning process. The opposition claimed that the government and UBK³⁴ had been running a massive wiretapping programme, monitoring the telephone conversations of 20,000 North Macedonians, including journalists, politicians and religious figures³⁵.

On the other hand, the Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, dismissed claims of illegal wiretapping and accused Zoran Zaev of plotting a coup with the assistance of foreign secret services to overthrow the government (Velkovski, 2015).

³³ "A few minutes after the polls closed, I'm here to say that SDSM and our opposition coalition will not recognize the election process, neither the presidential nor the parliamentary," Zoran Zaev, leader of the centre-left SDSM, told reporters. "Nikola Gruevski abused the entire state system", adding that there were "threats and blackmails and massive buying of voters" and demanded a new election. (Casule, 2015)

³⁴ UBK stands for Uprava za bezbednost i kontrarazuznavanje which is the counterintelligence and security agency of the North Macedonia.

³⁵ The "bombs" can be accessed through 24Vesti Televizija account in dailymotion in <https://www.dailymotion.com/search/BOMBA%20SDSM> (retrieved on 15/01/ 2019)

In May of the same year, following a state's prosecutor announcement about pressing charges against Zoran Zaev and other members of SDSM for “violence against representatives of the highest state bodies” the main opposition party announced a series of protests (the first took place on the 5th of May) that would lead to a major anti-government protest on Sunday the 17th of May which resulted the occupation of the public space outside the seat of the Government in Skopje (Johnson, 2015).

According to local newspapers' estimations between 20,000 and 40,000 (Day, 2015) people took part to the large demonstration of the 17th of May demanding the resignation of the government.



Figure 1 17th of May protest³⁶



Figure 2 17th of May protest

³⁶ All the photos are from my personal archive



Figure 3 17th of May protest

As an answer to the opposition's political pressure and weekly protests, organizations close to the ruling party organized a pro government rally on the 18th of May that gathered around 30,000 to 50,000 people and led to the occupation of the public space outside the Parliament in Skopje (Robinson, 2015).



Figure 4 18th of May Protest



Figure 5 18th of May Protest



Figure 6 18th of May Protest

In a parallel story, High school and University students organized several demonstrations (on the 19th of March and on the 1st of April) and boycotted the classes in April and May 2015 protesting against the government's proposed amendments to the Law on Higher Education envisaging that all students take a "state exam" before they complete their studies (Marusic, 2015).



Figure 7 Student Protest April 2015



Figure 8 Student Protest April 2015

In the meantime on the 9th and 10th of May in the town of Kumanovo (around 20km north of the North Macedonian Capital) there was a police raid that led to a shootout between the police and according to the Prime Minister's announcement on the 10th of May an "...armed group composed of ethnic Albanians which had planned attacks on a military base and state institution...s". During the shootings, eight policemen (there was a Macedonian Albanian police officer among them) and 14 of the militants were killed while thirty ethnic Albanians were charged with terrorism, but the court proceedings were all closed to the media over national security concerns³⁷ (Hopkins, 2017).

As we can see there was a lot of tense and political unrest in North Macedonia, a political unrest which was accelerated in April 2016, when the country's president, Gjorgje Ivanov, issued a blanket pardon to members of the political establishment who faced corruption allegations in the wake of the leaked telephone taps. Due to the unrest the pardon was withdrawn and early elections were called.

In the December 2016 elections, voters punished the governing coalition, making it impossible for the until then ruling VMRO-DPMNE to form a government since its former ethnic Albanian coalition partners have shown little enthusiasm for joining a VMRO-DPMNE coalition.

After VMRO-DPMNE failed to collect enough MPs to form a governing coalition, the Albanian parties struck a deal with Zoran Zaev's Socialists to form a new government

As we have stated before, in this chapter we tried to see a little bit the historic background and the framework which in a sense has led North Macedonia to the 2001 crisis. In addition we have also tried to capture the political situation in North Macedonia at the time which this research took place. These parts are necessary to integrate the reader into the historical, political theoretical context and makes it easier to follow the next chapters and to read and process the results of the current research.

³⁷ At the time of writing there is no decision or verdict made public concerning this case.

... “membership in a cultural community is a matter of personal choice, but this does not imply that members have chosen to be a minority. This status is imposed on them ... and could be seen as supplying a reason to support their chances of leading a meaningful and worthwhile life without having to renounce their cultural commitments...” (Tamir 1993: 42)

Chapter 2

Part 1 The theory of Consociationalism

The Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) was signed on 13 August 2001. As mentioned in the previous chapter the signing of this agreement was a response to the armed conflict in the Republic of North Macedonia between the Republic of North Macedonia’s Army, the police and the Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA). Even though officially signed in Skopje, the agreement was called the Ohrid Framework Agreement due to the fact that the signing was preceded by a series of negotiations that took place mainly in Ohrid³⁸. The signatories of the OFA were the leaders of the four biggest political parties in North Macedonia³⁹, former VMRO-DPMNE⁴⁰ president and Prime Minister Ljubcho Gjeorgievski, PDP⁴¹ president Imer Imeri, the presidents of SDSM⁴² Branko Crvenkovski and DPA⁴³ Arben Xaferi, the president of the Republic of

³⁸ According to the Internet magazine ‘Transitions Online’, the talks between the U.S envoy James Pardew, his EU counterpart Francois Leotard and the leaders of the four biggest parties of North Macedonia and a number of experts took place in a beautiful resort by the Lake Ohrid.
<http://www.tol.org/client/article/1759-24-30-july-2001.html>

³⁹ The two biggest Macedonian Slav and the two biggest Macedonian Albanian parties according to the 2008 parliamentary elections (European Election Database
http://eed.nsd.uib.no/webview/index.jsp?v=2&study=http%3A%2F%2F129.177.90.166%3A80%2Fobj%2FfStudy%2FMAPA1998&mode=cube&cube=http%3A%2F%2F129.177.90.166%3A80%2Fobj%2FfCube%2FMAPA1998_C1&top=yes)

⁴⁰ VMRO-DPMNE: Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (Translation taken from the party’s official web page, retrieved on 15/10/2014 from <http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk>)

⁴¹ PDP: Party for Democratic Prosperity (Translation taken from the party’s official web page, retrieved on 15/10/2014 from <http://www.ppd.org.mk>)

⁴² SDSM: Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (Translation taken from the party’s official web page, retrieved on 15/10/2014 from <http://www.sdsm.org.mk>)

⁴³ DPA: Democratic Party of Albanians (Translation taken from the party’s official web page, retrieved on 15/10/2014 from <http://www.gurra-pdsh.org>)

North Macedonia Boris Trajkovski, and one special representative each of the USA (James Pardew) and the European Union (François Léotard), respectively (Reeker, 2011).

The Framework Agreement came about in a way as a result of the EU/US involvement during the 2001 conflict (Dejan Marolov, 2013: 134). Although the EU and the US initially supported the North Macedonian government's military approach to the conflict as part of its crisis management approach, by May it became increasingly obvious that the North Macedonian government, which also suffered a serious domestic political crisis over how best to respond to the insurgency movement, would not be able to defeat the NLA militarily (Grillot, 2004: 68-69). Violent protests staged by the more extreme nationalist Macedonian Slavs, who opposed any negotiations and compromises as far as Macedonian Albanian rights were concerned and actively sought to resolve the crisis through military escalation, were beginning to undermine the Georgievski government (Phillips, 2004: 85-87). A proposal by the North Macedonian Academy of Sciences suggesting a division of North Macedonia⁴⁴ only threw more fuel on the fire (Ackermann 2002:73). Given the initial approach that the North Macedonian government should be allowed to manage the conflict militarily, a more politically constructive engagement on the part of the EU, the OSCE and NATO came relatively late in the crisis – we could say a reactive rather than preventive response. International mediation rested mostly with Javier Solana (at that time appointed as European Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy), who orchestrated the creation of a national unity government of all North Macedonian political parties on 13 May and prevented its collapse later that month. In early July, EU Special Envoy Francois Leotard, and his US counterpart James Pardew, were able to obtain a ceasefire agreement from the conflicting parties, which allowed for the beginning of political negotiations. Despite ceasefire breaches, a breakthrough came in late July, when Javier Solana and George Robertson (at that time appointed as the 10th Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), accompanied by OSCE chairman, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, went to Skopje with the promise that the EU, the OSCE, and NATO would assist in the implementation of a peace accord.

As shown in the previous chapter the armed conflict between the two sides was not something that came suddenly as a spill over effect of the Kosovo crisis. On the contrary the tension between the two ethnic groups had roots even before the

⁴⁴ According to Eben Friedman (Friedman, 2003: 3) then chairman of the North Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MANU) Gjeorgi Efremov proposed exchanges of population designed to make western North Macedonia into a homogeneously ethnic Albanian enclave for eventual cession to Albania. In return, Albania was expected to yield to North Macedonia a small area of land on the border near Lake Prespa with a small ethnic Macedonian Slav population.

independence of the Republic of North Macedonia and was growing gradually year by year. This growing tension finally found its way out after the Kosovo crises.

As already stated in the introduction, the aim of this chapter is to present and assess the Ohrid Framework Agreement, a tool with a dual-track strategy. It allowed the termination of hostilities through the disarmament and demobilisation of NLA fighters, while simultaneously pursuing a reform process in the Republic of North Macedonia that aimed to bring about long lasting peace within the country⁴⁵.

According to numerous researches, (Rupert Taylor 2009, Florian Bieber 2013, Stefan Wolff 2008) the Ohrid Framework Agreement is generally viewed as being based on a consociational approach. As such, a precious tool for analysing and understanding the Ohrid Framework Agreement is the work of Arend Lijphart on Consociationalism mainly presented on his work *Democracy in Plural Societies* (Lijphart 1977). On the other hand in order to assess the Ohrid Framework Agreement, our main source will be articles from scholars assessing the agreement and of course a critical eye on Consociationalism as put forward mainly by Philip Roeder and the late Donald Rothchild in their co-edited volume *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars* (Roeder and Rothchild 2005).

The chapter is divided as we have already discussed in the introduction into three major parts. The first contains an analysis of the theory of Consociationalism whereas the second will analyse the agreement and will identify how the theory of Consociationalism is implemented in the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Finally in the third part we will try to critically assess the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

The idea of consociational democracy was introduced by the Dutch political scientist Arend Lijphart in response to the failure of the Anglo-Saxon, majoritarian type of democracy in the new, post-colonial states in Africa and Asia (Daskalovski, 2002: 17-27). Lijphart explained the failure by the lack of suitability of liberal democracy to deeply divided societies. Instead, he proposed a consociational democracy based on four main characteristics:

⁴⁵ According to the Framework Agreement's preamble: "*The following points comprise an agreed framework for securing the future of Macedonia's democracy and permitting the development of closer and more integrated relations between the Republic of Macedonia and the Euro-Atlantic community. This Framework will promote the peaceful and harmonious development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identity and the interests of all Macedonian citizens*". Framework Agreement, Ohrid and Skopje, 13 August 2001. The English text of the Agreement retrieved on 28/05/2014 from <http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/filestore/Ohrid%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf>

1. Government by a grand coalition of the political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society
2. Mutual veto or 'concurrent majority' rule, which serves as an additional protection of vital minority interests
3. Proportionality as the principle standard of political representation, civil service appointments, and allocation of public funds
4. A high degree of autonomy allows each of the segments to run its own internal affairs (Lijphart 1977: 25)

These characteristics, more or less, were exhibited by all the classic examples of consociationalism: Lebanon, Cyprus, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Fiji, and Malaysia (Wolff, 2010:4). With some of these consociations having succeeded, such as in Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, and Belgium, and others having failed, like Lebanon, Cyprus, Fiji, and Malaysia, Lijphart also established conditions favourable to consociational democracy. These included territorial loyalties, a small number of political parties in each segment, about equal size of the different segments, and the existence of some cross-cutting cleavages with otherwise segmental isolation. The small size of the territory to which a consociational structure is applied and the direct and indirect internal and external consequences of this, as well as a tradition of compromise among political elites, are also emphasized by Lijphart as conditions enhancing the stability of the consociational settlement (Lijphart, 1977: 53–103).

Additionally, consociationalism includes such elements as: separation of powers, both formal and informal; balanced bicameralism and minority representation; multiparty system; multidimensional party system; territorial and non-territorial federalism and decentralization (Lijphart. 1984: 23-29). In consociational democracy ethnic groups are recognized by the state and given all the necessary conditions to preserve their separate existence and identity. Furthermore, the consociational state takes "*a neutral stand toward the conflict between the groups and impartially implements the compromises reached by group elites*" (Smootha 2001: 15).

Lijphart maintains that consociational democracy is appropriate to deeply divided societies, while critics of consociational democracy emphasize that it results in the division of a plural society into more homogenous and self-contained elements. On that view, consociational democracies are by nature stagnant, conservative, and oppressive (Daskalovski, 2002: 20).

The consociational democracy is, indeed, designed to involve and represent all the main societal segments of a plural divided society into the state's institutions and power

structures, guaranteeing all groups' representation while ensuring the state's political legitimacy and stability (Piacentini, 2019: 463). However, when the most salient cleavage around which political identities are built is ethnicity, its institutionalization may *"provide further incentives to emphasise these cleavages over others . . . and to build political alliances on the basis of those categories"* (Wimmer 2013: 13). Accordingly, one of the main critiques (O'Leary 2005; Reilly 2006) of the model is that, due to its emphasis on groups rather than individuals, institutionalized ethnicity may deepen groups' cleavages by strengthening the political relevance of ethnic collective identities and, eventually, power ends up more ethnically divided than shared. On the other side, consociationalism's supporters see crystallized collective identities as a pre-existing feature of the context, asserting that *"it is often more perverse to deny the existence and salience of ethnic identities . . . than it is to build upon them"* (O'Leary 2005: 19).

In order to appreciate fully the current state of consociational theory, it is useful to examine John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary's *The Northern Ireland Conflict: Consociational Engagements* (McGarry and O'Leary 2004a).

Northern Ireland and its 1998 Agreement, McGarry and O'Leary maintain, *"Highlights six important weaknesses in traditional consociational theory"* (McGarry and O'Leary 2004b: 4).

1. The neglect of external actors in the promotion and operation of consociational settlements. (McGarry and O'Leary 2004b: 4)
2. The trans-state nature of some self-determination disputes and the necessary institutional arrangements to address them. (McGarry and O'Leary 2004b: 10)
3. The increasing complexity of conflict settlements in which consociational arrangements form an important element but require complementary mechanisms (The design of the police, demilitarization, the return of exiles to their homes, the management of prisoners, education reform, economic policy, and the promotion of language and other group rights). (McGarry and O'Leary 2004b: 13)
4. Terminological and conceptual inaccuracies primarily associated with Lijphart's grand coalition requirement (The merits of PR-STV versus PR-party list electoral systems⁴⁶). (McGarry and O'Leary 2004b: 13)

⁴⁶*"Elections to the new 108-member Northern Ireland Assembly (first elected in 1998) are conducted under a proportional representation (PR) system, the single transferable vote (STV), in six member constituencies. This system is not what Lijphart recommends for consociational agreements. He is an advocate of party-list PR systems, principally because they are said to help make party leaders more*

5. The merits of preferential proportional electoral systems. McGarry and O’Leary 2004b: 15)

6. Allocation of cabinet positions by means of sequential proportionality rules. McGarry and O’Leary 2004b: 15)

As Stefan Wolff mentions, (Wolff, 2010:6) “...*in dealing with these weaknesses, McGarry and O’Leary offer both refinements of, and advancements to, traditional consociational theory. The refinements relate, first, to the technical side of consociational institutions, where the authors recommend STV instead of List-PR as an electoral system as it militates against the proliferation of micro-parties. Second, McGarry and O’Leary elaborate the usefulness of sequential proportionality rules, such as the d’Hondt mechanism or the Sainte-Laguë method⁴⁷, in the allocation of cabinet positions in order to avoid protracted bargaining between parties and increase parties’ incentives to remain part of cross-communal coalitions....*”

An advancement of consociational theory is McGarry and O’Leary’s contention that Lijphart’s grand coalition requirement is overstated, as “*what makes consociations feasible and work is joint consent across the significant communities, with the emphasis on jointness*” (McGarry and O’Leary 2004b:15). On that basis, they distinguish:

1. Unanimous consociations (grand coalitions),
2. Concurrent consociations (in which the executive has majority support in each significant segment) and
3. Weak consociations (where the executive may have only a plurality level of support amongst one or more segments)” (McGarry and O’Leary 2004b:15)

As McGarry and O’Leary state, “...*Consociations become undemocratic when elites govern with factional or lower levels of support within their segments. Northern Ireland between 1998 and 2001 operated intermittently as a concurrent consociation and sometimes looked like a weak consociation—because of a lack of majority support*

powerful within their parties and better able to sustain inter-ethnic consociational deals”. (McGarry and O’Leary 2004b:13-14)

⁴⁷ The D’Hondt mechanism and The Sainte-Laguë method are methods for allocating seats in party-list proportional representation used in many voting systems. The Sainte-Laguë method is quite similar to the D’Hondt method, but uses different divisors. In most cases the largest remainder method delivers almost identical results. The D’Hondt method gives similar results too, but favors larger parties compared to the Sainte-Laguë method.

amongst unionists, though it had plurality support amongst Protestants for much of the time.”. McGarry and O’Leary 2004b:15).

Part 2 The Ohrid Framework Agreement as a Consociation Agreement⁴⁸

As stated in the previous chapter, the main issues raised by the Macedonian Albanian community where,

1. Group status
2. Language rights
3. Educational rights
4. Discriminatory practices

So we can imagine that the OFA was mainly focuses on those issues as an answer to the Macedonian Albanian complaints.

Basically the agreement is divided into four parts (Whyte, 2001, Brunnbauer, 2002),

1. Basic Principles
2. Annex A including constitutional revisions
3. Annex B describing legislative changes, and
4. Annex C proposing measures to strengthen confidence and the implementation of the Agreement.

While the spirit of the agreement mainly focuses on four basic ideas

- A. Amendments to the Republic of North Macedonia’s constitution and Cultural issues,
- B. Decentralization of government,
- C. Political re-balancing,
- D. Cessation of hostilities as well as a timetable for its implementation

⁴⁸ In order to help the reader during this chapter we will be presenting useful parts of the agreement either as a footnote or inside the main text.

In some cases it simply echoes the existing European standards on these issues; in some cases it goes beyond them (Whyte, 2001).

A. Amendments to the Republic of North Macedonia's constitution and Cultural issues

According to the Framework agreement the Preamble to the constitution should be changed in a way to declare that the Republic of North Macedonia is a state for all its citizens:

“The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, taking over responsibility for the present and future of their fatherland, aware and grateful to their predecessors for their sacrifice and dedication in their endeavours and struggle to create an independent and sovereign state of Macedonia, and responsible to future generations to preserve and develop everything that is valuable from the rich cultural inheritance and coexistence within Macedonia, equal in rights and obligations towards the common good – the Republic of Macedonia, ...” (O.F.A. Annex A).

The then existing Preamble had defined the Republic of North Macedonia as the *“... National state of the Macedonian people, which guarantees the full civic equality and permanent co-existence of the Macedonian people with the Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and the other nationalities...”*.

The Agreement also includes changes to some other articles of the constitution which previously had given the Macedonian Slav people preferential treatment. The new wording of the constitution does not use the terms “Macedonian people”, “nationalities”, and “minorities”, but rather speaks of “majority population”, “communities” and “communities not in the majority”.

The Agreement also met the Macedonian Albanian demands regarding the establishment of an official status for the Albanian language.

According to article 7 (Annex A); *“(1) The Macedonian language, written using its Cyrillic alphabet, is the official language throughout the Republic of Macedonia and in the international relations of the Republic of Macedonia. (2) Any other language spoken by at least 20 percent of the population is also an official language, written using its alphabet, as specified below. (3) Any official personal documents of citizens speaking an official language other than Macedonian shall also be issued in that language, in addition to the Macedonian language, in accordance with the law.* In fact, only Albanian fulfils this condition (Brunnbauer, 2002: 4). In addition according to paragraph 6 of the article, Languages other than Macedonian which are spoken by at least 20 per cent of the

inhabitants of a municipality will, also serve as an official language in local self-government⁴⁹. Furthermore, according to article 48 (Annex A)⁵⁰ the members of the communities have the right to establish institutions for education for expression, fostering and development of their identity. This way the protracted “Albanian university” issue, which has been a cornerstone of Macedonian Albanian political activism in North Macedonia since the early 1990s, was finally put to rest (Škaric, 2006: 95). In addition to the above the article 6 paragraph 2 of the agreement states clearly that: *“funding will be provided for university level education in languages spoken by at least 20 percent of the population of Macedonia, on the basis of specific agreements”*.

The qualitative difference in the preserving the identity of article 48 (Annex A) is seen precisely in the word “guaranteed”, which means that preservation of the cultural identity is not just a “right” as previously defined, but is now guaranteed by the state. To what extent these rights are regulated can be noted in the same Article where the areas in which the communities have the right to express their identity are stated. (Sulejmani, 2008:209)

Although the following measure is more part of the political rebalancing process, it is worthwhile to add it here since there is no doubt that one of the most important actors for the protection of human rights and freedoms is the Ombudsman (article 4, Framework agreement). Since the Constitutional amendments passed in 2001, the Ombudsman is responsible for the protection of non-discrimination principles and the equal representation of all communities. This responsibility is exercised over national and local institutions and other public institutions. These Constitutional changes have been completed with the Law on Ombudsman, adopted in 2003 (Memeti, 2008: 203).

Another thing that was creating tensions in the Republic of North Macedonia was the privileged status given to the Macedonian Orthodox Church by the 1991 Constitution.

⁴⁹ (6) *In the units of local self-government where at least 20 percent of the population speaks a particular language, that language and its alphabet shall be used as an official language in addition to the Macedonian language and the Cyrillic alphabet. With respect to languages spoken by less than 20 percent of the population of a unit of local self-government, the local authorities shall decide on their use in public bodies”* (O.F.A. Annex A).

⁵⁰ (1) *Members of communities have a right freely to express, foster and develop their identity and community attributes, and to use their community symbols. (2) The Republic guarantees the protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of all communities. (3) Members of communities have the right to establish institutions for culture, art, science and education, as well as scholarly and other associations for the expression, fostering and development of their identity. (4) Members of communities have the right to instruction in their language in primary and secondary education, as determined by law. In schools where education is carried out in another language, the Macedonian language is also studied.* (O.F.A. Annex A).

In order to resolve this issue the Ohrid Agreement stipulated that other major religions also be given symbolic standing equal to the Macedonian Orthodox Church. So, article 19 (Annex A) states: *(1) The freedom of religious confession is guaranteed. (2) The right to express one's faith freely and publicly, individually or with others is guaranteed. (3) The Macedonian Orthodox Church, the Islamic Religious Community in Macedonia, the Catholic Church, and other Religious communities and groups are separate from the state and equal before the law. (4) The Macedonian Orthodox Church, the Islamic Religious Community in Macedonia, the Catholic Church, and other Religious communities and groups are free to establish schools and other social and charitable institutions, by ways of a procedure regulated by law.*

According to Daskalovski (Daskalovski, 2002: 18), it is rather interesting that the problem of article 19 of the constitution which symbolically ranked the Macedonian Orthodox Church higher than the other religious communities, was solved by placing the Islamic and the Catholic faiths on an equal level with the Orthodox Church leaving Members of the Judaic religion, Protestants etc., to be symbolically ranked lower than the individuals belonging to the major religions in the Republic of North Macedonia.

B. Decentralization of government

At the very beginning of the framework agreement (Article 1 paragraph 5)⁵¹ high importance is being given to the development of local self-government as a matter of utmost importance in order to ensure the participation of citizens in democratic life and to promote respect for the identity of all the communities living in the country. As a result municipalities and local authorities were commissioned with greater powers, over public services, urban and rural planning, environmental protection, finance, education, social welfare and health protection (Article 3 paragraph 3)⁵². That means that via local democracy, two goals must be achieved: “greater citizens” “participation in the democratic life”, and “upgrading and respecting the identity of the communities”. Furthermore the agreement commits the signing parties to take all necessary measures to

⁵¹ (1.5) *The development of local self-government is essential for encouraging the participation of citizens in democratic life, and for promoting respect for the identity of communities. (O.F.A)*

⁵² (3.3). *In order to ensure that police are aware of and responsive to the needs and interests of the local population, local heads of police will be selected by municipal councils from lists of candidates proposed by the Ministry of Interior, and will communicate regularly with the councils. The Ministry of Interior will retain the authority to remove local heads of police in accordance with the law. (O.F.A)*

ensure the adoption of a Law about Local Self-Government, public finances and the boundaries of municipalities. (O.F.A. Annex B articles. 1-3).

Although we will later discuss in more detail the implementation of the agreement it is worth mentioning few things on the implementation of the decentralization process. The process of decentralization in the Republic of North Macedonia began mainly with the adoption of the Law on Local Self-Government and the Law on the City of Skopje. These two laws are crucial, but are not the only ones which regulate the process of transfer of competences from state to local level. In order to regulate the process of decentralization, it was essential to change and amend some 40 other laws, as well as to adopt many by-laws in the transfer of competences. (Sulejmani, 2008: 152-153).

On January the 2nd, 2002 the Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia published the first Law on Local Government⁵³, which dealt with the powers of municipalities, the direct participation of citizens in decision-making, the work of municipal bodies, the resignation of the city council, mechanisms of cooperation between municipalities and central government, the protection of the institutions of Local Government, the determination of the official languages of municipalities etc. Regarding the official language of the local authorities; although Article 89 recognized the Macedonian language with its Cyrillic alphabet as the official language in the municipalities, article 90 paragraph 1⁵⁴ states that: *“Besides the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet, the language and the alphabet used by at least 20% of the inhabitants of the municipality shall be an official language in the municipality”*. In addition article 90 paragraph 2 states that *“The council of the municipality shall decide on the use of the languages and alphabets spoken by less than 20% of the inhabitants of the municipality”*⁵⁵. It is here useful to mention that in addition to the above, according to article 7 paragraph 1 of the agreement in order to facilitate the expression of the identity of local population it is stated that: *“With respect to emblems, next to the emblem of the Republic of Macedonia, local authorities will be free to place on front of local public buildings emblems marking the identity of the community in the majority in the municipality, respecting international rules and usages”*.

⁵³ Law on Local Self-Government, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No 5/2002, retrieved in English on 13/09/2014 from

<http://extranet.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/countries/Candidates/FYROM/Pages/5-Bibliography.aspx>

⁵⁴ Law on Local Self-Government, Official Gazette of Republic of North Macedonia No 5/2002, retrieved in English on 13/09/2014 from

<http://extranet.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/countries/Candidates/FYROM/Pages/5-Bibliography.aspx>

⁵⁵ Law on Local Self-Government, Official Gazette of Republic of North Macedonia No 5/2002, retrieved in English on 13/09/2014 from

<http://extranet.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/countries/Candidates/FYROM/Pages/5-Bibliography.aspx>

Finally, the same Law on Local Government with article 55⁵⁶ states that in municipalities in which more than 20% of the local population, as shown on the latest census, belongs to a community other than the dominant one, it is mandatory for a Committee for Inter-Community Relations at the municipal level to be set up. The Committee shall be composed by an equal number of representatives from the different communities that were recorded in the census. The Committee is responsible for monitoring the community relations and must issue recommendations for resolving any problems that may arise between different ethnic groups, which should be taken under serious consideration from the city council in order for a decision on this matter to be reached. In the competence of the Commissions of Inter-Community Relations is to review issues that refer to the relations among communities represented in the municipality and to give opinions and propose ways for their resolving. This norm referring to the competences of the commissions of inter-community relations is general and its intention is to cover all possible issues that could be of interest of the communities (Deskoska, 2010: 5-8). In the attempt to find some guidance to determining what kind of issues can be raised in front of the commission, we could refer to the Art. 41 of the Law of Local Self-Government, which enumerates the areas which are of special interest for the communities and in deciding of which the double majority voting should be applied. According to Article 41 of the Law of Local Self-Government, the decisions referring to culture, use of language and alphabet spoken by less than 20% of the citizens in the municipality, determining the coat of arms and flag of the municipality, shall be adopted by the majority of votes of the present council members, within which there must be a majority of votes of the present council members belonging to the communities which are not majority of the population in the municipality.

As stated above, another important law for the Decentralization process was the law 55/2004 on the City of Skopje passed in 2004⁵⁷, and which also caused the most

⁵⁶(1) *In the municipality in which at least 20% of the total number of inhabitants of the municipality determined at the last census are members of a certain community, a Committee for Inter-Community Relations shall be established.*

(2) *The Committee from paragraph 1 of this Article shall be composed of an equal number of representatives of each community represented in the municipality.*

(3) *The manner of election of the members of the Committee shall be regulated by the statute.*

(4) *The Committee shall review any issues that refer to the relations among the communities represented in the municipality and shall give opinions and propose ways for their resolution.*

(5) *The municipal council shall be obliged to review the opinions and proposals from paragraph 4 of this Article and to make a decision with regards to them.* Law on Local Self-Government, Official Gazette of Republic of North Macedonia No 5/2002

⁵⁷ Law on the City of Skopje, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No 55/2004, retrieved in English on 13/09/2014 from <http://www.esem.org.mk/en/index.php/introduction/15-introduction/budget-monitoring-and-analysis/107-legislation.html>

reactions (Rosulek, 2011: 75). Unlike the smoothly-approved law on self-government, (Rosulek, 2011: 80) the adoption of "*the Law City of Skopje and on Territorial Organization of Municipalities*" was preceded by long lasting ethnic disputes (Škaric, 2006: 108). As a consequence of some emotional and intense public discussions, the number of municipalities was reduced from 123 to 84 in 2004 and municipal borders were redrawn so that the obligatory bilingualism in units where minorities overreach 20% became effective for most Macedonian Albanians living in the country. On the other hand, Macedonian Slavs were most worried in Lozovo, Rostuse, Centar Župa, Struga, Kičevo and mainly in the capital of Skopje, which officially became a bilingual city. According to Rosulek, Macedonian Slavs felt that this law was responsible for the "loss" of their unilingual Skopje and for turning Macedonian Slavs into minorities in several new municipalities (Rosulek, 2011: 80-82).

C. Political re-balancing

The sections on "non-discrimination and equitable representation" and "special parliamentary procedures" are probably the most important parts of the document (Whyte, 2001).

According to article 4 paragraph 3⁵⁸ a third of the judges on the Constitutional Court, three members of the Judicial Council, and the Ombudsman, must be chosen by a majority of the Parliament "...that includes a majority of the Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia...". Moreover in article 5, paragraph 2⁵⁹ a similar provision applies to "...laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, as well as laws on local finances, local elections, the city of Skopje, and boundaries of municipalities..." though they require only a majority of votes, not of the Parliament as a whole.

⁵⁸ "(4.3). For the Constitutional Court, one-third of the judges will be chosen by the Assembly by a majority of the total number of Representatives that includes a majority of the total number of Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia. This procedure also will apply to the election of the Ombudsman (Public Attorney) and the election of three of the members of the Judicial Council ' "

⁵⁹ (5.2). "Laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, as well as laws on local finances, local elections, the city of Skopje, and boundaries of municipalities must receive a majority of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia".

There is a slightly higher threshold for constitutional amendments which touch on the core areas of the agreement (Annex A, article 131 paragraph 4)⁶⁰. To the existing requirement of a two-thirds majority is added the qualification that the votes in favour must include "... a majority of the Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia...".

If we closely look at article 131 we can see that it not only sets the need for a qualified majority (envisioning in reality veto powers of the minorities) in fields that are beyond the spheres of educational and linguistic rights, but also because members of the Parliament will decide for themselves whether or not they are members of the majority community - highlights the right of self-proclamation and the need for a decision by the individual, not a group decision (Daskalovski, 2002: 25).

The special parliamentary procedures foreseen in article 5⁶¹ of the agreement concerning a decision by Parliament on issues such as culture, use of language, education, personal documents, use of symbols etc. are to be processed by a double majority. This is the so-called "*Badinter majority system*", (Balalovska, 2006: 23) a requirement for a double majority, both the majority of the total number of Members of the Parliament and that of representatives of ethnic communities in the vote of any laws and constitutional amendments considered important to ethnic communities not in the majority. The solution of the double majority is considered a balance between the requirement of the Macedonian Albanian parties for full use of the veto and rejection of the proposal by the Macedonian Slav parties. (Balalovska, 2006: 24)

In case of disagreement on the use of double majority in Parliament, decisions would be adopted by a majority of members of the Committee for Inter community

⁶⁰ (131.4) "A decision to amend the Preamble, the articles on local self-government, Article 131, any provision relating to the rights of members of communities, including in particular Articles 7, 8, 9, 19, 48, 56, 69, 77, 78, 86, 104 and 109, as well as a decision to add any new provision relating to the subject matter of such provisions and articles, shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the total number of Representatives, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the total number of Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia."

⁶¹ (5.1). On the central level, certain Constitutional amendments in accordance with Annex A and the Law on Local Self-Government cannot be approved without a qualified majority of two-thirds of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia.

(5.2). Laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, as well as laws on local finances, local elections, the city of Skopje, and boundaries of municipalities must receive a majority of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia.

relations (Article 78 paragraph 6 of Annex A)⁶², the creation of which is provided by Article 78 of Annex A of the Agreement⁶³. According to the Agreement the Committee consists of 19 members, seven members each from the Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians within the Assembly, and five members from among the Turks, Vlachs, Romanies and two other communities. The five members each shall be from a different community; if fewer than five other communities are represented in the Assembly, the Public Attorney, after consultation with relevant community leaders, shall propose the remaining members from outside the Assembly. Commission President would be elected by its members.

Another area in political re-balancing is the provision for Equitable Representation in public administration through the recruitment of members of under-represented communities (article 4, paragraphs 1 and 2)⁶⁴. In addition and more specifically as mentioned clearly in Annex C, Article 5, paragraph 2, *“The parties commit themselves to ensuring that the police services will by 2004 generally reflect the composition and distribution of the population of Macedonia. As initial steps toward this end, the parties commit to ensuring that 500 new police officers from communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia will be hired and trained by July 2002, and that these officers will be deployed to the areas where such communities live. The parties further commit that 500 additional such officers will be hired and trained by July 2003, and that these officers will be deployed on a priority basis to the areas throughout Macedonia where such communities live...”*.

⁶² (Annex A, 78.6) *In the event of a dispute among members of the Assembly regarding the application of the voting procedure specified in Article 69(2), the Committee shall decide by majority vote whether the procedure applies.*

⁶³ (1) *The Assembly shall establish a Committee for Inter-Community Relations.*

(4) *The Committee considers issues of inter-community relations in the Republic and makes appraisals and proposals for their solution.*

(5) *The Assembly is obliged to take into consideration the appraisals and proposals of the Committee and to make decisions regarding them.*

⁶⁴ (4.1) *The principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment of all under the law will be respected completely. This principle will be applied in particular with respect to employment in public administration and public enterprises, and access to public financing for business development.*

(4.2) *Laws regulating employment in public administration will include measures to assure equitable representation of communities in all central and local public bodies and at all levels of employment within such bodies, while respecting the rules concerning competence and integrity that govern public administration. The authorities will take action to correct present imbalances in the composition of the public administration, in particular through the recruitment of members of under-represented communities. Particular attention will be given to ensuring as rapidly as possible that the police services will generally reflect the composition and distribution of the population of Macedonia, as specified in Annex C.*

E. Cessation of hostilities as well as a timetable for its implementation

Regarding the cessation of hostilities, according to Article 2 of the agreement⁶⁵ NATO troops were invited to collect the weapons from the NLA and to supervise its demobilization, a mission which NATO referred to as “Essential Harvest” (Brunnbauer, 2002: 7). NATO and the NLA agreed that 3,300 weapons should be collected from the NLA, despite government claims that the NLA possessed up to 85,000 weapons (Alagjovovski, 2001).

As far as the implementation is concerned, the agreement not only sets specific dates for the implementation of certain policies (for example in article 3, paragraph 2 states that “*Boundaries of municipalities will be revised within one year of the completion of a new census, which will be conducted under international supervision by the end of 2001*”) but also dedicates a whole Annex (Annex C) in which the implementation of core policies described in the agreement are scheduled to be completed within a specific timeline.

Part 3 Assessing and Understanding the spirit of the Ohrid Framework Agreement

If we closely examine the two previous parts of this chapter we can easily see that the general principles of the Agreement as well as the outline of the proposal for the Laws on the Civil Service and Public Administration, together with the proposal for changes of the Rules of Procedure for the Assembly reflect the ideas and the spirit of consociationalism. In particular, the proposals for amendments in articles 69, 77, 104, 109, 114, 131 (Annex A, OFA), of the Framework Agreement were introducing a series of constitutional amendments aimed at strengthening the power-sharing mechanisms of North Macedonia’s political system “echoing consociationalist principles” (Engstrom, 2002: 9). For example the proposed changes to article 69 paragraph 2 state that: (2) *For laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, the Assembly makes decisions by a majority vote of the Representatives*

⁶⁵(2) *The parties underline the importance of the commitments of July 5, 2001. There shall be a complete cessation of hostilities, complete voluntary disarmament of the ethnic Albanian armed groups and their complete voluntary disbandment. They acknowledge that a decision by NATO to assist in this context will require the establishment of a general, unconditional and open-ended cease-fire, agreement on a political solution to the problems of this country, a clear commitment by the armed groups to voluntarily disarm, and acceptance by all the parties of the conditions and limitations under which the NATO forces will operate.*

attending, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives attending who claim to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia. In the event of a dispute within the Assembly regarding the application of this provision, the Committee on Inter-Community Relations shall resolve the dispute.

Clearly the amendment anticipates the right of minority veto, a typical consociationalist practice for the protection of the interests of national minorities in the Republic of North Macedonia (Daskalovski, 2002: 27). This is the case in Belgium, where in 1970 a constitutional amendment was passed which stipulated that: “*laws affecting the cultural and educational interests of the language groups can be passed only if majorities of both the Dutch- speaking and French-speaking parliamentary representatives give their approval*” (Lijphart 1977: 38). According to the agreement, the Republic of North Macedonia has to constitutionally protect the educational and linguistic interests of its own ethnic groups. Moreover as specified previously, In an effort to promote power-sharing arrangements, the proposed amendment to article 131 (Annex A, article 131 OFA) calls for a minority veto regulating how the parliament could make further changes to the North Macedonian Constitution. According to this provision of the Framework Agreement, and somewhat similarly to the situation in Belgium (Daskalovski, 2002: 28), the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia can be changed by a two-thirds majority of the deputies in the parliament, but the articles in the constitution that were considered of vital interest to the national minorities would require approval of the majority of the members of the parliament not belonging to the majority group in the population. This in practice grants the Macedonian Albanians a right of veto, even without the support of other ethnic minorities, given that the number of Macedonian Albanian representatives in the parliament exceeds the total number of Members of the Parliament belonging to non- Macedonian Albanian ethnic minorities⁶⁶.

The overall objective of these measures could not be other than to eliminate any structural, institutional and practical discrimination of Macedonian Albanians in the social and political spheres. The fact that these amendments were subject to approval by a vote in the Republic of North Macedonia’s parliament (as we are going to see further on our research when we are going to see the implementation of the agreement) meant that, from the outset, the survival of the Agreement has been dependent on the members of parliament, many of whom oppose a number of the provisions set forth in the Agreement. Representatives from the European Union and the United States, therefore exerted

⁶⁶ After the last elections of 2014 the country ‘s minorities current representation in the Parliament is, ethnic Albanians 27 seats, Serbs 1 seat, Turks 1 seat, Bosnian 1 seat, from the Official website of the North Macedonian Assembly, retrieved in English on 13/09/2014 from <http://www.sobranie.mk/>

constant diplomatic pressure on the republic of Macedonia's political leaders to ensure that the Framework Agreement was ratified in full (Engstrom, 2002: 8-9).

Finally, as mentioned above According to Article 4 paragraph 3 of the Agreement one-third of the judges on the Supreme Court were to be elected with the same formula as the members of the Republican Juridical Council. The amendments discussed here clearly intended not only to protect specific cultural interests of minority ethnic groups but also to politically empower them, in line with the consociationalist theory of Arend Lijphart (Daskalovski, 2002: 29).

Assessing the Ohrid Framework Agreement

A. Public Opinion

Before assessing the Ohrid Framework Agreement it is worthwhile and useful to devote a few lines to the public reception of the framework agreement in the Republic of North Macedonia.

According to Alice Ackermann many Macedonian Slavs not only resented the Framework Agreement but also felt anger at the international pressure that was put on their politicians to sign the peace accord and proceed toward the implementation of its terms (Ackermann, 2002:79) and perceived the Ohrid Agreement as a severe loss of their security (International Crisis Group, Balkans Report 122, 2001: 9). It is hardly surprising that the decision of NLA to pick up arms in early 2001 had consequences for North Macedonia and its people. The armed hostilities in 2001 left each side with high levels of distrust and sentiments of existential threat, and loss of personal and societal security (Ackermann, 2002:81). According to Ulf Brunnbauer (Brunnbauer, 2002:8) *"...Editorials in leading newspapers called it a fatal indulgence to terrorism which would put the country's future existence under threat because the real aims of the extremist Albanians were not the acquisition of rights but territories..."*.

Also, many people in the Republic of North Macedonia feared that the Agreement was holding the seeds of another war especially since part of the Macedonian Slav community that felt strongly their security and identity had not been taken into account in the peace process (Ackermann, 2002:83).

To conclude on the public reception, it is rather interesting to read a small part of a discussion held in the program "radio most" (Meaning Radio Bridge in Macedonian) of Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty between Aleksandar Damovski, the then director of

the Macedonian Slav newspaper “Dnevnik” and the Macedonian Albanian programs journalist Omer Karabeg⁶⁷:

Omer Karabeg: *Is the Ohrid agreement fair? There is a widespread feeling among Macedonians that the agreement has made too many concessions to the Albanians. Do you agree, Mr. Damovski?*

Aleksandar Damovski: *I find the constitutional changes that improve the civic character of our state necessary, and that they would have come into being even without the military pressure of the Albanians. The main problem is that it all happened as a result of the aggression by the Albanian terrorists in Macedonia, and therefore the agreement signed in Ohrid looks like the result of those terrorist activities.*

Omer Karabeg: *Mr. Damovski, does it mean that you agree with those who think that the Albanian rebellion has been rewarded, that the Albanians have, in effect, obtained more rights through the barrel of a gun?*

Aleksandar Damovski: *Yes, yes. This is what the Ohrid agreement is all about.*

Omer Karabeg: *Mr. Damovski, I have a feeling that anti-Western attitudes are growing stronger in Macedonia, and that the Macedonians are not very enthusiastic about having a NATO mission in their country.*

Aleksandar Damovski: *You are right. One of the main reasons for that attitude is the so-called revolution that has been imported from Kosovo. I do not agree with Mr. Rusi's claim that the Macedonian UCK is indigenous, that it was created by Macedonian Albanians.*

In February, we saw how terrorism was imported from Kosovo into Macedonia -- partly because Macedonian political leaders were not able to stop it -- which provided the foundations for strengthening the UCK in Macedonia.

Omer Karabeg: *You think that the rebellion was organized in Kosovo?*

Aleksandar Damovski: *That is where it all started, and that is the main reason for the anti-Western feelings in Macedonia, since KFOR and NATO troops are in Kosovo. This is what ordinary Macedonian citizens think.*

⁶⁷ The interview is part of the South Slavic Report published by Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty on September 13, 2001. (South Slavic Report 2001: v. 3 no. 32 retrieved in English on 13/09/2014 from <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1344953.html>)

Aleksandar Damovski: *I really do not think that Ali Ahmeti operates on his own, that he is a sort of deserter from the [civilian] Kosovo Protection Corps, which is what the former Kosovar UCK has become. I think that the actions of the Kosovo Protection Corps, the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja, and Bujanovac, and the UCK⁶⁸ in Macedonia are very well coordinated.*

Omer Karabeg: *You think that there is a common idea behind it all? What is that?*

Aleksandar Damovski: *The idea of conquering territories in Macedonia.*

Omer Karabeg: *Are you talking about the idea of a Greater Albania?*

Aleksandar Damovski: *Yes, I am talking about uniting Kosovo, a part of western Macedonia, and Albania. That [this is happening] is being confirmed with every passing day. The Macedonians, not the Albanians, are being exposed to ethnic cleansing in Macedonia.*

B. Further Assessment

The Framework Agreement promotes decentralization of the Republic of North Macedonia, under the assumption that this will increase the effectiveness and equity of state structures (theory of consociationalism, Lijphart 1977: 25). But, according to Engstrom, decentralization of an already weak state can be a very destructive approach, and might well lead to the further weakening of the state, which could well result in the total collapse of the Republic of North Macedonia (Engstrom 2002: 13). As Lake and Rothchild maintain, political decentralization “*is likely to be most stable and effective when there are multiple regions or groups with numerous cross-cutting cleavages and relatively balanced capabilities. That is, decentralization is most viable when no one region or group is sufficiently strong that it is likely to achieve dominance.*” (Lake & Rothchild 2005: 130). Having this in mind Engstrom states that “*...In Macedonia, however, cross-cutting cleavages are generally lacking, and territorial decentralization is likely to create communities in which either Macedonians or Albanians dominate, not communities where the power balance between various ethnic groups is symmetrical. Hence, decentralization will simply recreate spheres of political dominance by one group or the other, thus creating new possible arenas for conflict. Any genuine and ethnically inclusive power-sharing arrangement is thus unlikely to be effectively implemented...*” (Engstrom 2002: 17) In addition Despite calls from the Turkish community in the Republic of North Macedonia for a more inclusive interethnic dialogue, the smaller

⁶⁸ Kosovo Liberation Army

minorities in the Republic of North Macedonia have also largely been neglected in the 2001 crisis (Engstrom 2002: 14). Instead, the debate has centred on the question of whether Republic of North Macedonia is or should be a mono-national or bi-national state, not a multi-national/ethnic state. As noted by the Republic of North Macedonia's Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights: *"...On the one hand, the events resulted in the Macedonian majority population's increased sensitivity to the Albanian issue, leading to overreactions, growing mistrust and fear of movements towards secession. On the other hand, the ideas of bilateral dialogue or bi-nationalism provoked reactions on the side of the other minorities in Macedonia – the ethnic Turks, the Roma, the ethnic Serbians and last but not least – the Vlachs.."* (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of North Macedonia and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights Joint Statement 2001)⁶⁹

David Lake and Donald Rothchild argue that three strategic problems – governance, the incompleteness of constitutions, and transient majorities – make it difficult for institutional arrangements of territorial decentralization to provide long-term peace and stability (Lake and Rothchild 2005: 125-130). However, Lake and Rothchild also note that decentralization is not to have unintended negative consequences in the face of *"general fatigue with war, the development of a commitment to resolve disputes through bargaining and reciprocity, and the emergence of respect and good will among the parties"* (Lake and Rothchild, 2005:132).

The International Crisis Group in 2006 concluded that the Ohrid Agreement *"...was never designed as a comprehensive program for democratic reform. Rather, it was intended to advance the country to a point where grievances of minority communities would no longer threaten peace and stability..."* (ICG, Europe Briefing, 2006). According to Kristina Balalovska the implementation of O.F.A instead of enhancing, had a particularly negative impact on the quality of Republic of North Macedonia's democracy and *"...has led to a certain democratic deficit, which is not likely to vanish once the FA is fulfilled. One strain comes from the process of implementation of the FA and, by extension, the nature of the political actors in North Macedonia. Another comes from the nature of the institutions themselves and their functioning"*. (Balalovska 2006: 51)

⁶⁹ Joint Statement by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Serbia 12 Apr 2001 retrieved in 07/09/2014 from <http://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/joint-statement-helsinki-committee-human-rights-republic-macedonia-and-international>

Furthermore one of Roeder and Rothchild's main findings is that power sharing is a useful short-term mechanism to overcome commitment problems (Lake and Rothchild 2005: 58-60) that may prevent conflict parties in the immediate aftermath of civil wars from agreeing to and sticking with a peace settlement, but that it is detrimental to peace and stability in the long term, arguing that "*power sharing institutions in ethnically divided societies after intense conflicts typically have a set of unintended but perverse consequences*" (Rothchild and Roeder 2005: 29).

To sum up, the Ohrid Framework Agreement, despite its non-segregationist tone has de facto led to a number segregationist practices, including those in the educational sector that create few opportunities for cooperation which subsequently further increase any ethnic distance⁷⁰ (Bieber 2011: 22-23). According to Gallup Balkan Monitor data, ethnic distance is greater in a number of fields than in most other countries of the region, including post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, the Republic of North Macedonia has the lowest number in the western Balkans of people who indicate that a friend or relative is married to a member of a different ethnic group (17.8%)⁷¹. Similarly, together with Kosovo and Albania, Republic of North Macedonia has the lowest level of people willing to have children play with children from other groups⁷².

In reaching the end of this chapter it is important to say that although we have an extensive look and an assessment of the Ohrid Framework agreement, we can only come to safe conclusions on whether the agreement almost fourteen years after its signing was a success, after further research analysis in the chapter to come.

⁷⁰ Park defined in his work social distance and subsequently ethnic distance as "*the grades and degrees of understanding and intimacy which characterize pre-social and social relations generally*" (Park, 1923: 339) thus the concept can be understood as "*the cultural, structural, and ideological distance between two actors*" (Schnittker, 2004: 219)

⁷¹ In Kosovo the percentage is 19.5%, elsewhere between 30 and 40%.

⁷² In the Republic of North Macedonia 74.1%, in Kosovo 67.1%, in Albania 72.4%, in the rest of the Western Balkans around 90%. For the entire survey see the online survey of the Gallup Balkan Monitor "Insights and Perceptions: Voices of the Balkans 2010", retrieved in 19/06/2014 from http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/files/BalkanMonitor-2010_Summary_of_Findings.pdf

... “Polling is merely an instrument for gauging public opinion. When a president or any other leader pays attention to poll results, he is, in effect, paying attention to the views of the people. Any other interpretation is nonsense ...” George Gallup (as cited in A. F. Simon, 2011: 47)⁷³

Chapter 3

Part 1 Field Research presentation and Methodology

If we try to be a little bit more poetic, the Ohrid Framework Agreement, as described and analysed in the previous chapters is not only a piece of paper but aspired to be a vehicle that would turn North Macedonia into a land of stability and prosperity, a country with a government as Abraham Lincoln stated in his famous Gettysburg Address⁷⁴ “of the people, by the people, for the people.” These people and their views about themselves about their country and about their fellow citizens will be the main topic of this chapter.

More specifically we will try to assess the outcome of a research project that took place in North Macedonia between February and May 2015 in comparison to a similar one that took place in 2011 and, with the use of current literature, to see whether the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Theory on which it is based managed to fulfil their goal and create a sustainable society in North Macedonia. In this Part we do a small presentation of the research and will discuss the Methodology used for it.

In chapter one we saw what was the political situation in North Macedonia during the time that the survey took place, in order for the reader to understand some of the problems and challenges faced during the survey to be able to understand how the environment has affected the research, how the research could be perceived by the target population and of course to be able to see the responses as part of the socio-political environment in North Macedonia.

⁷³ Adam F. Simon Mass Informed Consent: Evidence on Upgrading Democracy with Polls and New Media, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011

⁷⁴ On November 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Lincoln had been invited to give a "few appropriate remarks" during a ceremony to dedicate a cemetery for Union soldiers killed at the Battle of Gettysburg. Despite its brevity and the fact that it earned little attention at the time, the Gettysburg Address is considered one of Lincoln's greatest speeches. The Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/gettysburg.html>

This research is a purely quantitative one. Between February and May 2015 more than 300 questionnaires were produced.

As mentioned previously, the idea was to see how the views of people in North Macedonia have changed throughout the years after the signature of Ohrid Framework Agreement by comparing the results of a previous survey. The idea though was not only to try and replicate an already published survey but also to try and capture the results of the implementation of the OFA to the North Macedonian society.

This research has used as a basis the research and the work that has been done in 2011 for the project “*Strategies of symbolic nation-building in West Balkan state*⁷⁵” that also led to the writing of the book *Strategies of Symbolic Nation-building in South Eastern Europe* edited by Pål Kolstø⁷⁶. According to Kolstø (Kolstø, 2011) the research consisted on two elements. 1. Deliberate homogenization of the population's political cultural identity; and 2. Policies to link this identity to the state. The project concentrated on symbolic nation-building, meaning state strategies for the manufacture and manipulation of cultural symbols intended to create a sense of nationhood in a population. The aim was to see if these strategies resonate in the population. To determine the success and failure of the nation-building strategies the correspondence between the idea of nationhood that is propounded by the state leaders and the collective self-understanding of the population was measured. Albert Hirschman's trichotomy of "exit, voice and loyalty" was used as a template to operationalise this criterion (Hirschman, 2004).

Here it is very important to mention the vital assistance of Pål Kolstø and Ljupso Risteski who agreed to share with me their work and of the Ipsos offices in Belgrade and Athens who were kind enough to disclose to me all the information about the research they organized and carried out for the above mentioned project. In addition the people in Ipsos were very helpful in my effort to adapt my research to theirs.

In order to produce comparable results to the previous research, this research has used the same methodology that Ipsos used on the above mentioned survey.

The target population was the entire population, 18+ while the sampling frame was determined by the use of 2002 Census and other updated published statistics for the country such as the CIA fact book. The sampling type used was Stratified three-staged

⁷⁵ More information on this project can be found in <https://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/research/projects/nation-w-balkan/>

⁷⁶ More information about this book can be found on publisher's web page <https://www.routledge.com/products/isbn/9781472419163>

random representative (Strata: Regions - Skopje, Northwest – Tetovo, Gostivar Area, Southwest – Bitola, Ohrid, Struga Area⁷⁷). The initial sample size was 262 questionnaires⁷⁸. In addition to the initial questionnaires, 43 more questionnaires were completed by 5 special target groups⁷⁹

These groups were:

- University students who took part in the large protest on the 1st of April
- Member of football fan clubs since football is the most popular sport in the country for both national groups under investigation⁸⁰,
- Members of religious groups regularly practicing,
- People who took part in the two major protests on the 17th and 18th of May.

The need for additional questionnaires, even though very small in number to examine them separately, became vital during the survey in order to be able to capture the views of people that were part of groups with enhanced influence in the country (Jiaferi, 2014). According to Manasiev, politicians and fan associations in North Macedonia are locked in a symbiotic relationship, where patronage is traded for endorsement. Ruling parties seem to have historic relations with football clubs and their supporters that they

⁷⁷ Especially after the conclusion of the negotiations between the EU and Bulgaria in 2004 the number of North Macedonians who have acquired the Bulgarian passport has increased significantly (more than 71,000 people today) mostly from the eastern part of the country (Manev, 2018). Since nationality was playing a vital role for the analysis of the data and in order to avoid having an increase representation of Bulgarians in the sample there was the decision to exclude the east part of N. Macedonia from the survey a decision which was expected to lead to a slight increase of the number of Albanians in the sample.

⁷⁸ The number was agreed with Ipsos in order for the sample to be representative and comparable with the one from the initial survey.

⁷⁹ The additional questionnaires were performed after consultation with Ipsos in order not to alter the prerequisites of the initial survey.

⁸⁰ Football plays an important role in the area and has a great influence especially among youngsters. It is not by chance that The riots in Zagreb and the Maksimir stadium in 1990 between Dynamo Zagreb fans and Red Star of Belgrade fans are seen by many as the unofficial start of the Croatian War of Independence, one of the many conflicts to make up the Yugoslav Wars (Fox, 2016) (Kuper: 181-5, 2011)

regard themselves as the soldiers of the nationalist causes that dominate North Macedonian politics (Manasiev, 2012).

All interviewers were people with extensive experience in surveys. The training procedure was organized in Skopje in Tetovo and in Bitola. The procedure included discussing the questionnaire and explaining the fieldwork procedure was supervised by me.

Each interviewer got the package of printed questionnaires to be completed, including the starting point of his survey in each area under investigation. The interviews were conducted in the afternoon, after working hours on weekdays, and during the morning and afternoon on weekends. In each building only one respondent could be interviewed. While entering the household, the interviewer used Kish Grid⁸¹ to choose the respondent.

Of course this does not apply to the additional questionnaires since those were only possible to complete during the actual event when referring to the protests, after or before the liturgy when referring to the religious groups and just before a football game when referring to the football fans. The work for the additional questionnaires was carried out by me assisted when needed by a cultural mediator due to security concerns.

When analysing the social and political context in which the survey took place; we saw that at the time there was great polarization along both ethnic and political lines. According to the interviewers due to the political situation there were a few incidents when respondents did not respond well to some of the questions⁸². Nevertheless the interviewers were well trained and were able to sort everything out and carry out the interview without any problem. In addition as mentioned above due to the nature of the additional questionnaires there was the need to deal with some security issues that it was mostly possible to overcome. But, in two cases it proved impossible to obtain completed questionnaires from Macedonian Slav football fans and from Macedonian Albanian religious groups.

⁸¹ The Kish grid or Kish selection grid is a method for selecting members within a household to be interviewed. It uses a pre-assigned table of random numbers to find the person to be interviewed. It was developed by statistician Leslie Kish in 1949. (Laurie 2004)

⁸² One of these questions was the political party that the respondent is supporting. Because this was one of the final questions, a lot of respondents felt that they had already disclose enough of their personal view and that maybe this was not indeed a scientific research but something else.

Before we proceed with the analysis of the data we will take a look at some of the survey's introductory questions in order to make sure that our sample was representative and is giving us the opportunity to make some valid conclusions.

Table 2, Ethnicity

| What is Your Ethnicity? | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Slav Macedonian | 160 | 52,5 | 52,5 |
| Albanian | 107 | 35,1 ⁸³ | 35,1 |
| Serb | 2 | ,7 | ,7 |
| Bosniak | 1 | ,3 | ,3 |
| Vlah | 6 | 2,0 | 2,0 |
| Roma | 17 | 5,6 | 5,6 |
| Turk | 10 | 3,3 | 3,3 |
| Other | 2 | ,7 | ,7 |
| Total | 305 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

Following the ethnic groups we will take a look on the total household income of the respondents in association to their ethnicity

| | | What do you consider to be your ethnicity? | | | | | | | | Total |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | Macedonian | Albanian | Serb | Bosniak | Vlah | Roma | Turk | Other | |
| Total HOUSEHOLD income | Low (0-300€) | 31,60% | 18,10% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 50,00% | 41,10% | 11,10% | 50,00% | 26,90% |
| | Average ⁸⁴ (300-500€) | 40,10% | 53,60% | 50,00% | 100,00% | 33,40% | 29,40% | 55,50% | 0,00% | 44,60% |
| | High (500€ and above) | 27,50% | 24,20% | 50,00% | 0,00% | 16,70% | 29,50% | 33,30% | 50,00% | 26,90% |
| | DN | 0,70% | 4,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 1,80% |
| Total | | 100,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% |

Table 3, Total HOUSEHOLD income

⁸³ As mentioned before since there was no survey on the eastern part of the country where the Macedonian Albanian population is limited we were expecting a slight larger number of Macedonians Albanian to be represented as percentage of the entire population which is rather insignificant and is not affecting so much the entire survey.

⁸⁴ According to the State Statistical Office of North Macedonia the average net salary for North Macedonia in 2015 was 374€.

Last but not least we will see the educational background of our respondents in association again to their ethnicity.

| | Finished primary | Unfinished secondary | Unfinished secondary but has training | Finished secondary | Unfinished university | University – associate degree | University – bachelor degree at least |
|------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Macedonian | 0,6% | 0,6% | | 22,7% | 7,8% | 13,0% | 55,2% |
| Albanian | 4,8% | 1,9% | 2,9% | 47,1% | 18,3% | 9,6% | 15,4% |
| Serb | | | | | 50,0% | | 50,0% |
| Bosniak | | | | 100,0% | | | |
| Vlah | | 16,7% | | 16,7% | 16,7% | | 50,0% |
| Roma | 17,6% | | | 17,6% | 17,6% | 11,8% | 35,3% |
| Turk | | | | 40,0% | | 10,0% | 50,0% |
| Other | | | | 50,0% | 50,0% | | |
| Total | 3,0% | 1,4% | 1,0% | 31,8% | 12,5% | 11,1% | 39,2% |

Table 4, educational background

From the initial data presented we can see that our sample is more or less representative of the total population in North Macedonia so now we can proceed with a certain degree of certainty to examine the rest of the responses taken from the quantitative research in comparison to the responses from the initial research.

Part 2 Data Analysis

In this part not only will we see the outcome of the survey that took place in North Macedonia between February and May 2015 in comparison to the similar one that took place in 2011, but also with the help of the current literature we will try to analyse the numbers and the variations we see.

For better understanding of the survey we have divided our analysis in four different segments, two small and introductory and two larger. First we will see how the two larger ethnic groups⁸⁵ living in the country see North Macedonia. In the second

⁸⁵ In the data presented in this part we will have the following division which is mainly the one used also in North Macedonia, Macedonian Slavs will be presented as Macedonians and Macedonian Albanians will be presented as Albanians.

segment we will discuss how people see the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Then we will examine how people see the policies of the State and finally we will analyse how people see and witness the inter-ethnic relations in the country.

Segment A: How people see the country in which they live

In the first table (table 5) we will see which country people feel as their homeland, an important factor to begin our analysis with.

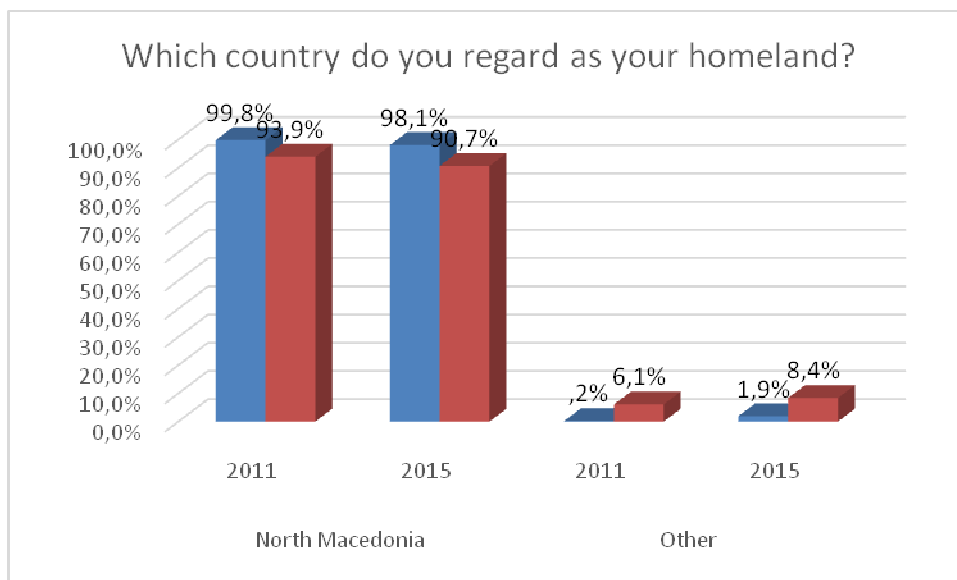


Table 5, which country do you regard as homeland

We could say that the outcome of this question seems very promising since what we can say from this table is that even though there is a slight decrease in the number of Albanians who regard North Macedonia as their homeland, the vast majority, almost every one of the people asked, feels North Macedonia to be their homeland.

Unfortunately the problem starts when people are asked to answer whether they are happy with their life in the country (table 6) where we can see that the percentage of people that were considering their life in the country wonderful has decreased substantially. Especially the percentage of Albanian has decreased from 20% to only 2.9%. It is though very interesting that the number of people who consider their life to be bad has not increased so much, around 10% for Macedonians and 8% for Albanians.

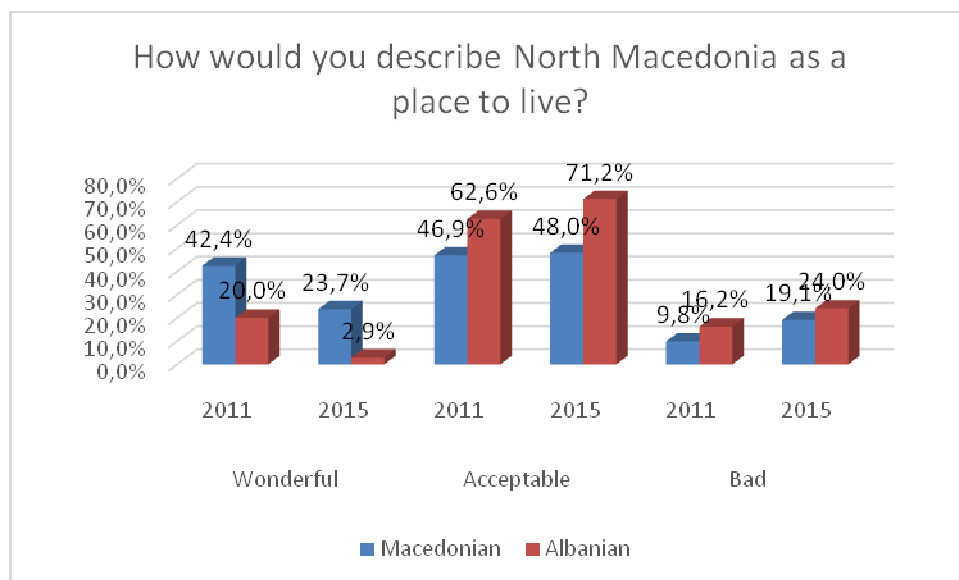


Table 6, North Macedonia as a place to live

To continue with the life of people in North Macedonia, we can see from the following table (table 7) that people are now more uncertain about their future in the country. If we check the number of people who would not consider leaving the country we can see that this has decreased. The biggest decrease is among Albanians, from 42% to 15%. On the other hand the number of people who are not so sure has increased substantially with the largest increase being among Macedonians from 8% to 37%. Even though we do not know for sure the reason for this uncertainty we can imagine that the political situation in the country could have played an important role especially among Macedonians.

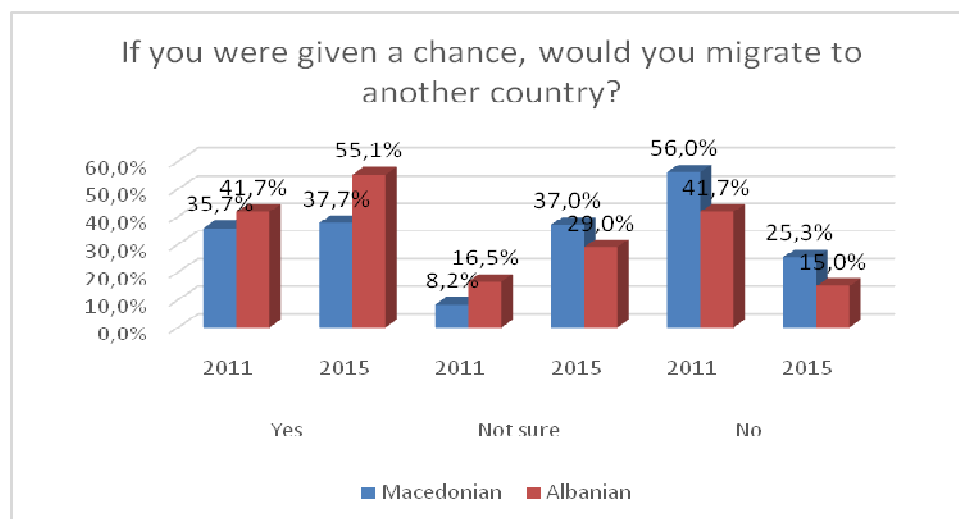
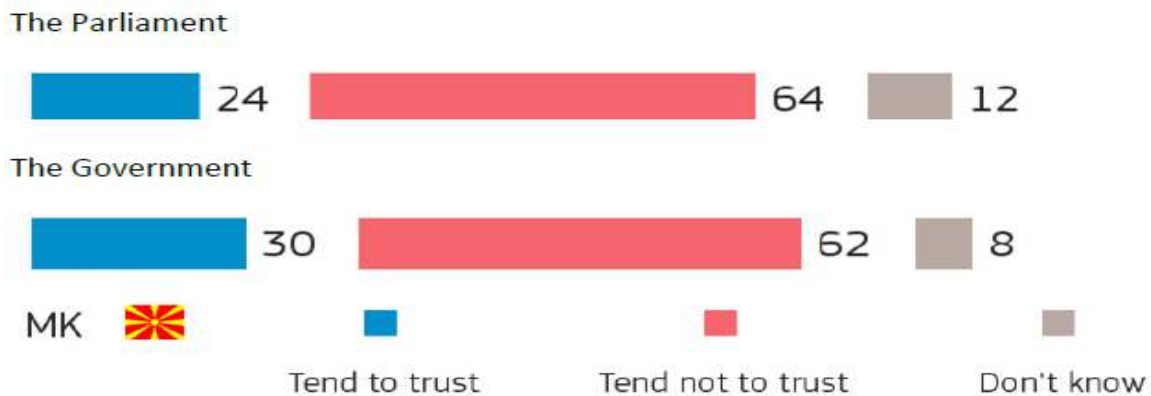


Table 7, migration to other country

It is also very logical to think that the main reason that people want to leave North Macedonia is indeed the high rate of unemployment in the country. Though if we get a closer look to the relative data, we can see that according to the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia⁸⁶ between 2011 and 2015 the unemployment rate has dropped from 31.4% to 26.1%.

To go one step further it is very interesting to see how people answered for the Eurobarometer volume for autumn 2015 to the question how much trust (%) you have to certain Institutions (table 8).

Table 8, level of trust to certain institutions⁸⁷



It is obvious from the Eurobarometer results that there is a general mistrust towards the North Macedonian state though in order to be able to have a better view on why people feel sceptical about their future in the country, we will have to examine more carefully the relations between the citizens and their state which it will be the case in the following segments, especially segment C. As the international ngo International Alert says⁸⁸ “...Prospects for peace are strongest when governments operate transparently and accountably to deliver goods and services to the population, when laws reflect the common good, and when citizens and government collaborate to define and take practical action on the right priorities...”. On the same page we can also have in mind what Hassner is saying about Kant’s work. The task of establishing a universal and permanent peaceful life is not only a part of the theory of law within the framework of pure reason, but per se an absolute and ultimate goal. To achieve this goal, a state must

⁸⁶ A more complete view of the economic data of North Macedonia can be retrieved from the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia’s website and their MakStat database in <http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/en/MakStat/?rxid=46ee0f64-2992-4b45-a2d9-cb4e5f7ec5ef>

⁸⁷ Source Standard Eurobarometer 84, Autumn 2015.

⁸⁸ More information about International alert and their work to help people find peaceful solutions to conflict in over 30 countries around the world can be found on www.international-alert.org.

become the community of a large number of people, living provided with legislative guarantees of their property rights secured by a common constitution. The supremacy of this constitution must be derived a priori from the considerations for achievement of the absolute ideal in the most just and fair organization of people's life under the aegis of public law (Hassner 1987: 581-3).

Segment B: How people see the Ohrid Framework Agreement

During Ohrid Framework Agreement's tenth anniversary Conference at the South Eastern European University, Livia Plaks (Plaks 2011: 47-48), said: "[...] *OFA was and remains a trend setting document regarding minority rights and interethnic relations in South-Eastern Europe. Certainly there are lessons to be learned from OFA, [...] lessons that could improve coexistence in this part of the world. At the end of the day, the OFA did address the issues at the core of the conflict and ended up creating a functioning state.*" In addition, according to Florian Bieber, "*Throughout the years, the agreement had its ups and downs. From a positive side, it ended the conflict and it stabilized the country. In this sense, in comparison to other regional peace contracts, such as Dayton for instance, it is considered as the most successful one in securing effective power sharing*".(Bieber 2008: 7)

But what do people think about the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement? As we can see in the following table (table 9), we can see some very interesting results. On one hand we can see that 56% of the Macedonians in 2011 mostly and fully agreed that the Ohrid Framework Agreement has been implemented properly. This number dropped substantially on 2015 to 23%. On the other hand in 2011 50.9% of the Albanians fully and mostly disagreed that the Ohrid Framework has been implemented properly. This percentage plumed in 2015 with 16.9% of the Albanians fully and mostly disagreeing that the Ohrid Framework Agreement's implementation was proper.

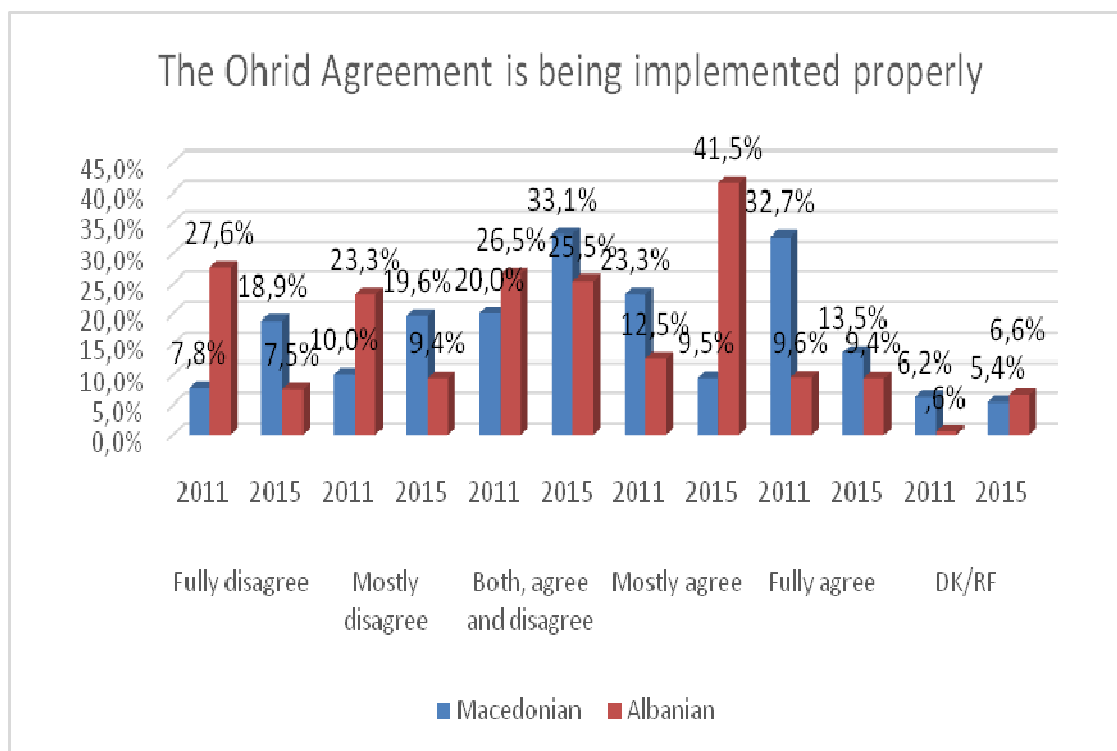


Table 9, implementation of O.F.A.

In addition according to Rizankoska, (Rizankoska et al 2016: 7) the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement was perceived as successful by the then (in 2015) governmental coalition, while the rest of the parties opposed it. *“While the opposition parties from the Albanian bloc propose new agreements, and changes to the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the rest of the opposition parties point out at the partization of the Ohrid Framework Agreement’s implementation as the reason for bad results. Parties in general see worsened inter-ethnic trust at individual level due to the Ohrid Framework Agreement’s implementation, partly because the government coalitions use Ohrid Framework Agreement to manipulate the economically fragile electorate, and partly because some policies deriving from the Ohrid Framework Agreement have produced parallel worlds where so far ethnic communities peacefully co-exist, but they do not cohabitate”.* (Rizankoska et al 2016: 9)

How people live the implementation process? In the following table (table 10) we will see how people react when they witness the implementation of a core principle of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, that of the status of the Albanian language. It is interesting how people react when they actually come across of a change insignificant one can say –

the introduction of the Albanian language to the traffic signs- but visible to most of the people's everyday life.

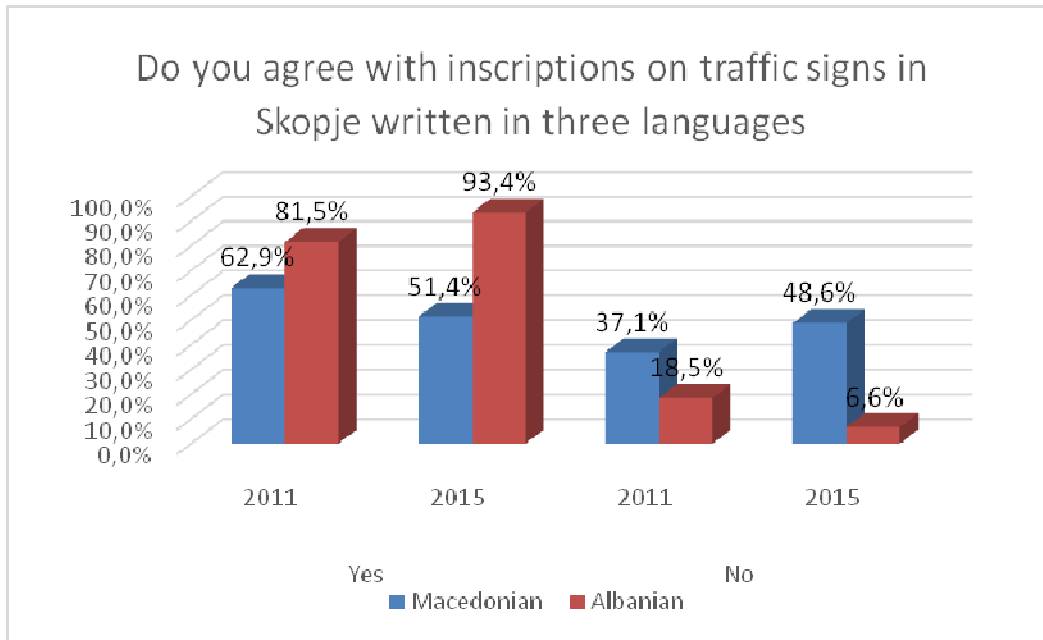


Table 10, multilingual traffic signs

We can definitely see that there is a decisive increase towards the satisfaction of the Albanian population and dissatisfaction of the Macedonian population against the introduction of the Albanian language in the public sphere.

But what we can say has been fully implemented so far? According to the European Institute of Peace's analysis on the Ohrid Framework Agreement social cohesion aspect has noted, there are significant developments in the following areas:

1. On decentralization

Significant strides towards decentralized governance as one aspect of a vibrant democracy and as a contributing factor for social cohesion has been made. However, in particular fiscal decentralization remains critical, i.e. the decision-making space of local self-governments on spending priorities remains limited and the transparent and equitable allocation of funds to the units of local self-government is challenging.

2. On equitable representation

Over the years there have been achievements in respect to equitable representation. However all non-majority communities, including the ethnic Albanian community, remain underrepresented. There are decisive variations among public bodies, a more serious underrepresentation of numerically smaller non-majority communities as well as significant underrepresentation of all non-majority communities in managerial positions.

3. On the use of languages

The current legislative framework and the implementation practice of certain authorities does not fully realize the language rights of non-majority community members guaranteed in the constitution, in particular the legislation introduces a requirement of territoriality for addressing central institutions, and certain authorities demand a request for the issuance of bilingual documents instead of automatically issuing them. In addition, the legislative framework adopts a relatively restrictive interpretation of linguistic rights and does not stipulate for the translation of secondary legislation and chairing the parliamentary sessions in a language spoken by at least 20% of the citizens.

4. On education

Education in the mother tongue at primary and secondary level for the Albanian and Turkish community is by and large realized; for other communities additional efforts are needed. Preschool education opportunities are limited and children of non-majority communities are underrepresented. Education remains highly divided (little to no interaction between children from different language communities) and is at times considered divisive, e.g. in respect curricula and textbooks.

5. On non-discrimination

In the perception of citizens there is discrimination based on ethnicity. Non-harmonization of Macedonian legislation, the lack of capacities in judicial and quasi-judicial institutions, the limited willingness to implement provisions on hate speech and hate crime, the lack of targeted programs to eradicate inequalities in the employment market, including gender inequality, but also the delay in adopting a law regulating the rights of victims of the 2001 conflict impede effective action against discrimination or public perceptions thereof.⁸⁹

Furthermore we can see that according to Demush Bajrami people in North Macedonia have a relatively negative opinion considering the Ohrid Framework

⁸⁹ "Ohrid Framework Agreement. Review on Social Cohesion," European Institute for Peace, Accessed March 4, 2018, <http://eip.org/sites/default/files/OFA%20Review%20on%20Social%20Cohesion%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

Agreement in total. In detail, according to the findings of a poll conducted in November 2013 (Bajrami et al 2014) showed that only 31% of the citizens in North Macedonia had a positive opinion on the Ohrid Framework Agreement, whereas 47%, were giving negative considerations, whereas 22% gave no opinion about it. This research also pointed out the fact that, Albanians and Macedonians had different opinions about the Agreement. Only 3% of the citizens were thinking that the Agreement was serving the ethnic Macedonian's interests. On the other hand 47% of them thought it was serving the Albanians. Meanwhile, no more than 19% of the citizens were thinking that this Agreement was working in the service of all the citizens, and 31% had no opinion. Another unpleasant fact is that only 29% of the citizens were thinking that there was an improvement in interethnic relations in Macedonia, on account of this Agreement. As can see also in the following table (table 11) the vast majority of the population

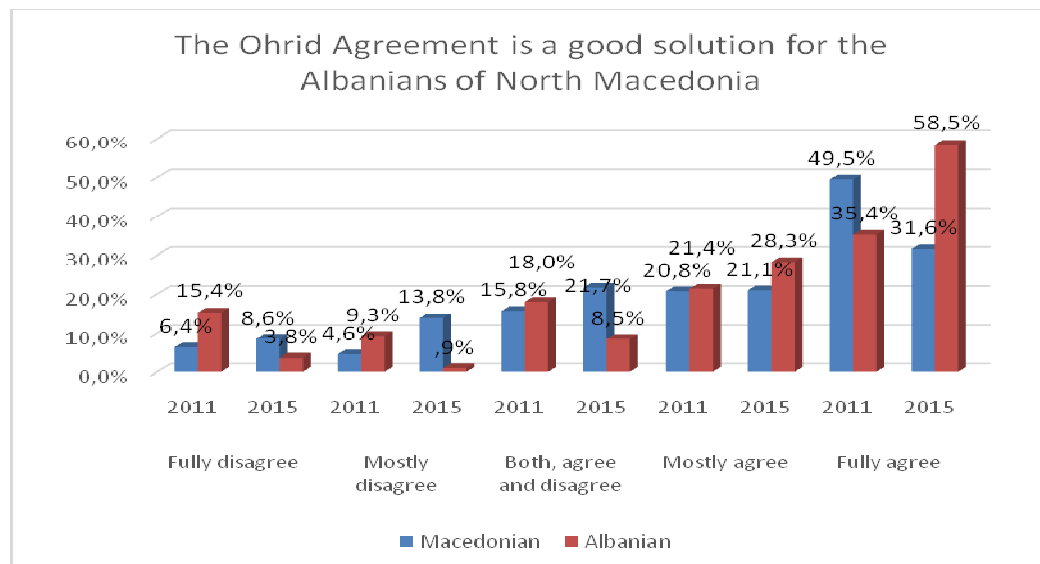


Table 11, O.F.A. for Albanians of North Macedonia

in North Macedonia even from 2011 agreed that the Ohrid Framework Agreement was serving the interests of the Albanian population in the country. As Piacentini also points out (Piacentini 2019: 463), *“the official implementation of power-sharing mechanisms was unequivocally meant to be a solution to pre-existing exclusions and, although this was not explicitly stated, to satisfy some of the ethnic Albanians’ requests, which had been negated by the ethnic majority for a decade and erupted in a short conflict”*.

Considering the position of smaller ethnic communities after the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement it is interesting to follow the work of Sali Ada which stresses that *“Today, post-conflict Macedonia is a model of a country of even stronger*

division on ethnic lines, maybe not in territorial manner like in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but surely in respect to, who holds political power. While smaller minorities are still trying to somehow reach the threshold of at least 20% on local level, in order to be able to enjoy any collective and minority related right, Macedonians and Albanians are still competing over exercising control in the whole state. Knowing all that, we can say that the Ohrid Framework Agreement played an important role in the short-run, ending the violence between the two major groups in the country, but the post-conflict period signified the continuation of the non-violent, 'institutional war' towards all smaller ethnic communities". (Ada, 2016).

In short, as Bieber points out, *"the Ohrid Framework Agreement transformed Macedonia from a self-defined nation state with an informal grand coalition arrangement into a state straddling between nation state, civic state and bi-national state with a formal power-sharing structure"* (Bieber 2008: 17).

Segment C: How people see the North Macedonian State

Having seen in the Eurobarometer results how people react towards the government and the parliament in this segment we will see how the policies followed by the then ruling party effect the population in North Macedonia and their feelings towards the state. First we will discuss a huge and important project - Skopje 2014 - and then we will see how people feel in general about state policies.

Skopje 2014 was the trademark project (Vale, 2017) of former PM Gruevski, aimed at transforming the capital of giving it a more classical appeal. The project, officially announced in 2010, consisted mainly of the construction of museums government buildings and the erection of monuments depicting historical figures from the region of North Macedonia. Around 20 buildings and over 40 monuments were planned to be constructed as part of the project (Marusic, 2012). According to a database⁹⁰ created by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, until 2016 around 136 structures have been built costing more than \$700 million.

In our next table (table 12) we will see the initial feelings and impression that people of North Macedonia have of Skopje 2014 project. A project that as we will see created some tension and discomfort among the different communities in the country.

⁹⁰ More can be seen on Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) data base on <http://skopje2014.prizma.birn.eu.com/en> Assessed on March 4, 2016

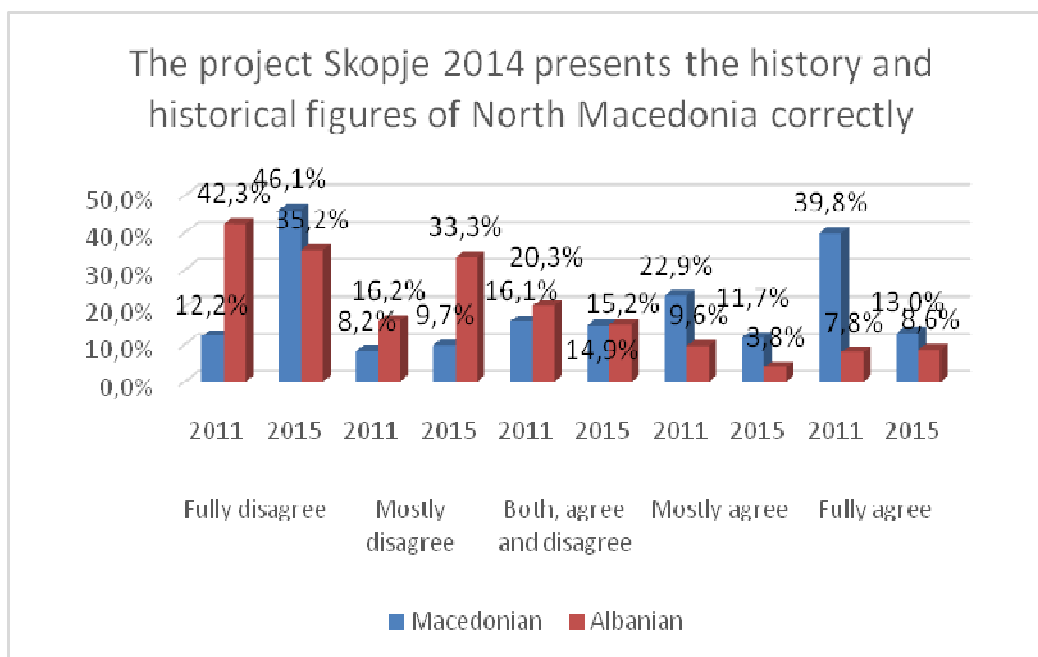


Table 12, Project Skopje 2014

It is very interesting to see that most of the people have changed their views about the project Skopje 2014 when they have actually seen it been realized. As mentioned before the project Skopje 2014 was announced in 2010 and the initial survey by Ipsos was conducted in September 2011 when of course most of the project was still on paper whereas the next survey has taken place in 2015 when large part of the project has been unveiled.

Especially between Macedonians the percentage of people believing that the project would not present the history and historical figures of Macedonia correctly increased from 20% to 56% whereas between Albanians the percentage rose from 59% to 68%.

In table 13 we will try to move one step further and examine how people see the project in relation to the multi-ethnic relations and the multi-ethnic character of the country.

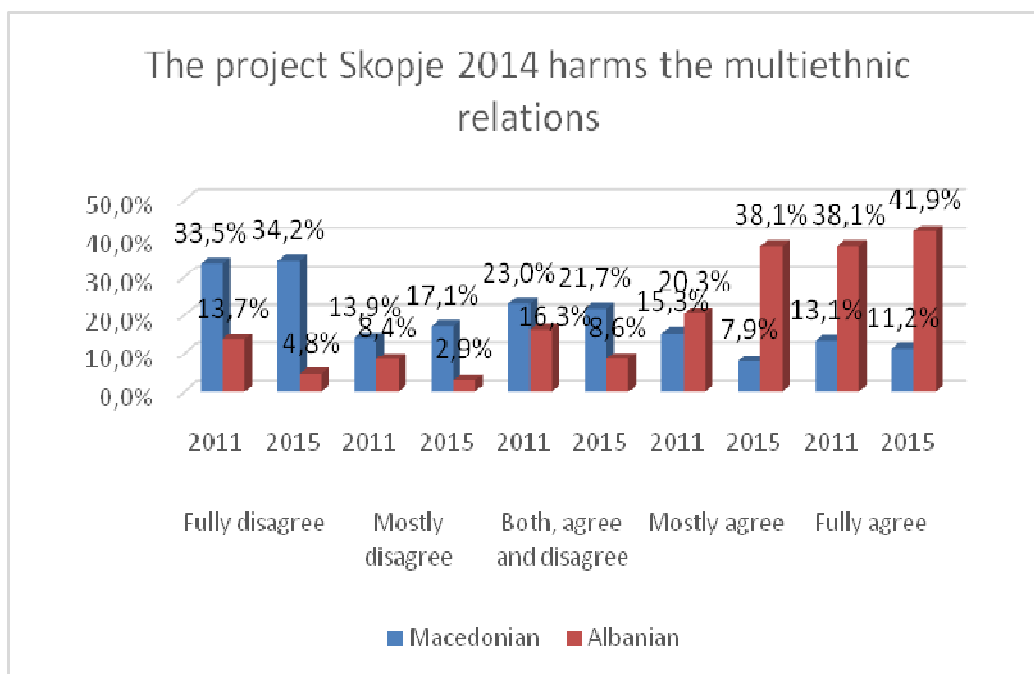


Table 13, Skopje 2014 and multiethnic relations

Even though we saw in table 12 that Macedonians believe that the project is not presenting the history and historical figures of Macedonia correctly 51% of them believes that the project does not harm the multi-ethnic relations between Macedonians and the other ethnic communities. A number that even has slightly increased from the previous survey in 2011. On the contrary the number of Albanians believing that the project harms the multi-ethnic relations between the ethnic communities of the country has skyrocketed from 58% to 80%

Since we have clearly seen that most of the people especially among the Albanian community believe that the project Skopje 2014 is creating additional tension in the country, it would be interesting to examine a plan from the Skopje 2014 project which attracted some more attention and this is the plan for the restoration of the fortress of Skopje and of the construction of a museum.

The plan for the fortress was to excavate the place and then reconstruct some of the old fortress walls and create new content that would draw more visitors. In February 2011, mid-construction, it all came to an abrupt halt when the fortress became the scene of a pitched battle between Albanians and Macedonians over a small museum designed in the shape of a church erected on the foundations of an old Christian basilica to hold artefacts from medieval time (Marusic, 2019a).

In a bid for what it saw as equal treatment, the Islamic Religious Community, IVZ, the second-largest group representing the Islamic community, called for the creation

of an additional space or a new bigger place that could host artefacts from the Ottoman time. This fuelled friction between mainly Macedonians and Albanians (Marusic, 2012). In a compromise decision following the reactions, the project was stopped and until the time of this Thesis there is no clear decision on the issue.

From the table 14 we can see that the population in North Macedonia is again divided. 43% of the Macedonian population believes that the Construction of the church - museum on Skopje fortress cannot disrupt inter-ethnic and inter religious relations of communities in Macedonia while 64% of Albanian believes the opposite. An interesting remark is the fact that the percentage of Albanians who believe that the Construction of the church - museum on Skopje fortress can disrupt inter-ethnic and inter religious relations of communities in Macedonia has slightly decreased. According to some notes from the interviewers there were quite a few people especially among Albanians that refused to answer to this question saying more or less that “*we killed this project, there is nothing to say about it*”.

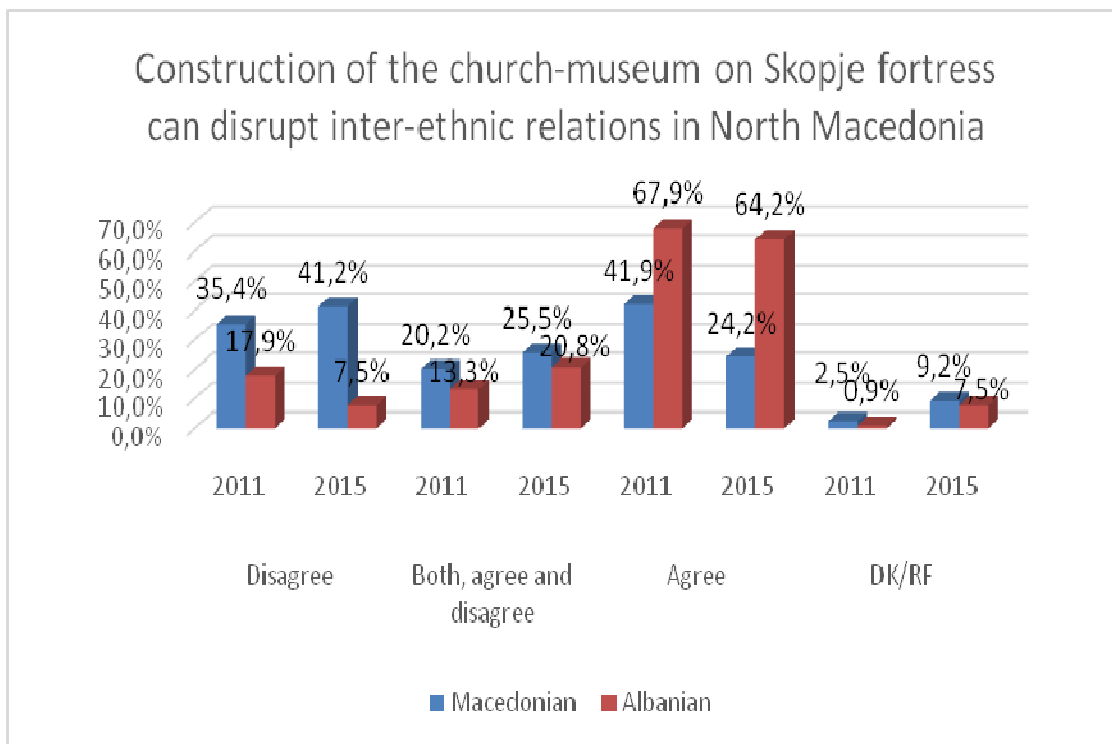


Table 14, Church Museum on Skopje fortress

Despite the negative feelings that part of the population of the country has towards the project 2014 in the next table we can see an additional factor. According to table 15 we can clearly see that project 2014 has deeply affected the way that people are feeling about Skopje and subsequently their place in that city.

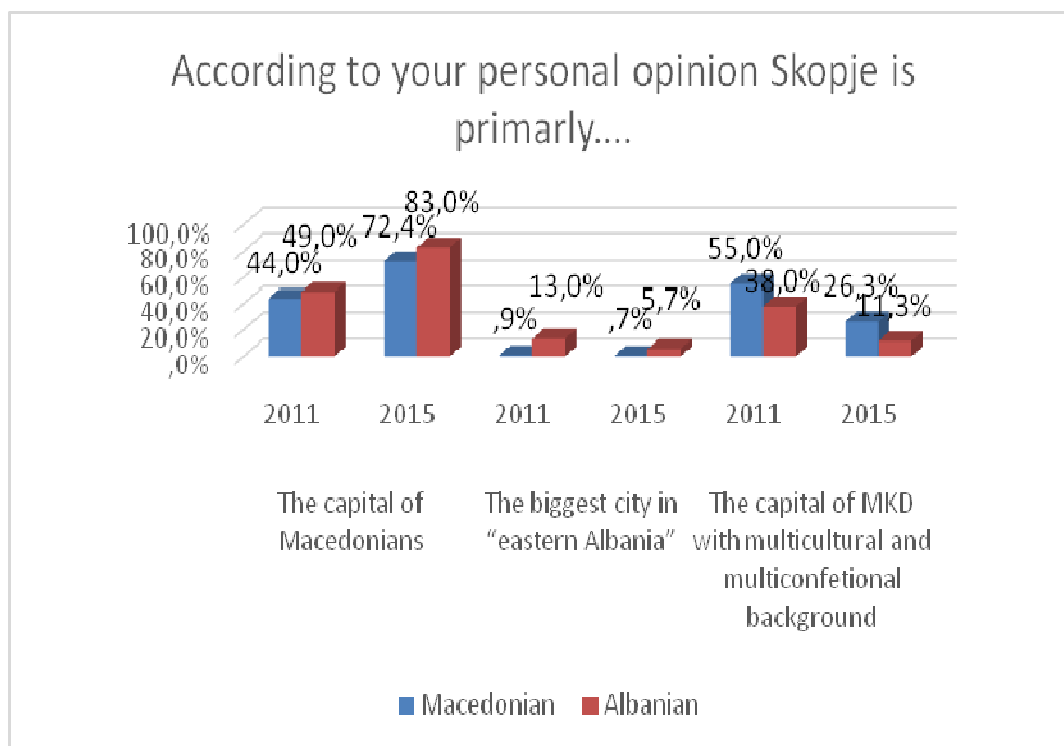


Table 15, Skopje is...

In 2011 when the project was just starting, the Majority of Macedonians and a large part of Albanians were considering Skopje to be the Capital of their country with a multicultural background. There was also quite an important percentage of Albanians that were considering Skopje as an “Albanian city”. After the project Skopje 2014 the vast majority of the population more than 70% of Macedonians and more than 80% of Albanians consider Skopje to be just the capital of Macedonians something that clearly effects people’s state of belonging. In the next tables the effects that of North Macedonia’s government policies have in people minds will be more obvious.

In the next two tables (table 16 and table 17) we will see how people feel they are treated by their state according first to their ethnic group and then according to their religion. An interesting remark also in the next two tables is the rise in refusals to answer. The next two questions according to notes from the research team created some discomfort to an important number of respondents.

In table 16 we can see clearly that the vast majority of the population believes that state authorities in North Macedonia do not treat ethnic communities equally.

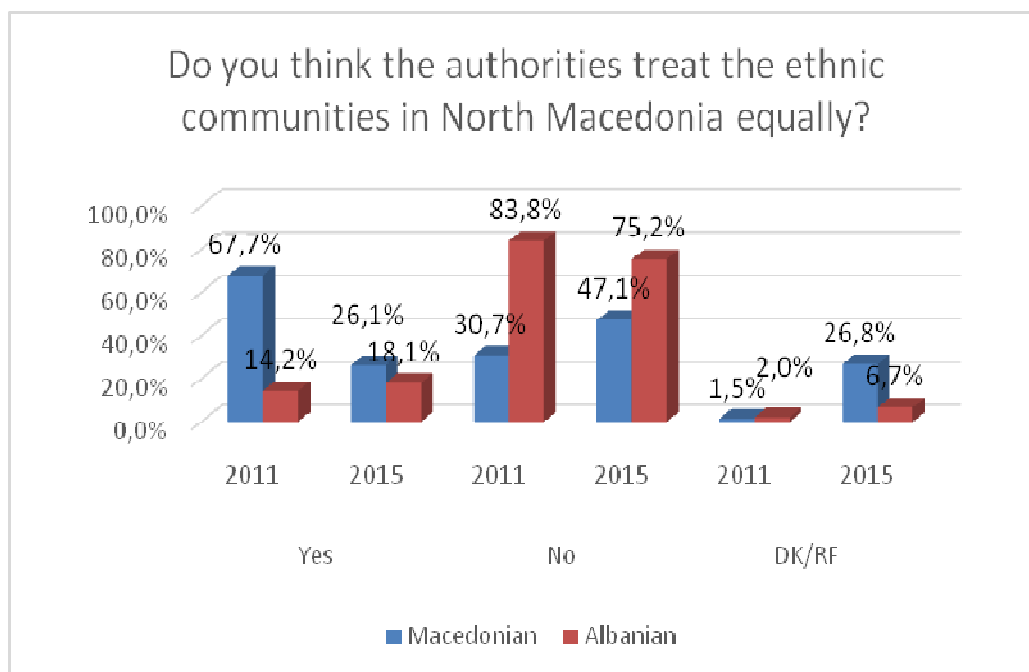


Table 16, ethnic communities' treatment

The drop of the percentage of Macedonians that believed in 2011 that state authorities treat people of different ethnic groups equally is outstanding from almost 68% to 26%.

Here it is worth saying and it is good to keep in mind when we see how people feel that are being treated that the relative deprivation theories hold that groups suffering economic discrimination or income disparities will mobilize around collective demands for redress in future. Muller-Rommel (Muller-Rommel, 1994) initially assumed that the potential for a centre periphery conflict rises in a period when national resources become scarcer. Sorens (Sorens, 2012), on the other hand, has empirically proven that national minorities seek far-reaching self-government or independence only when there are significant economic and political benefits to such a status.

Following in table 17, we can see that among Macedonians the drop of the percentage of people who believe that the Authorities treat religious communities in the country equally has dropped from 73% to 28% whereas at the same the percentage of Albanians who believe that there is no equal treatment remains very high.

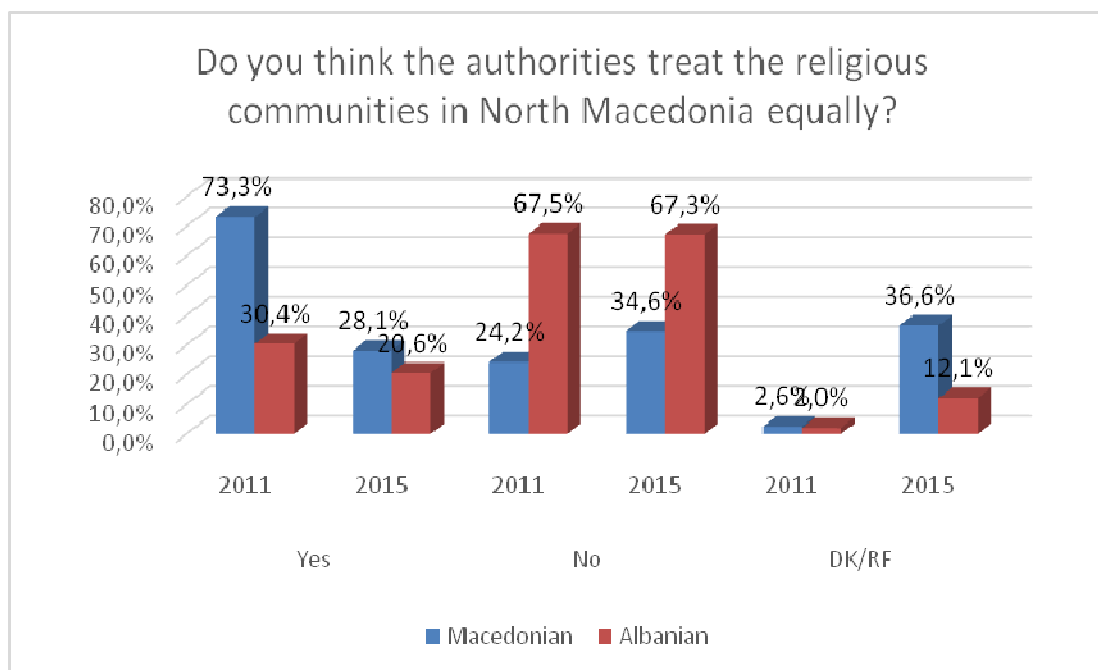


Table 17, religious communities' treatment

But why to bother with the inequalities towards religious communities when we have already discussed about the feeling of inequality in North Macedonia among ethnic communities?

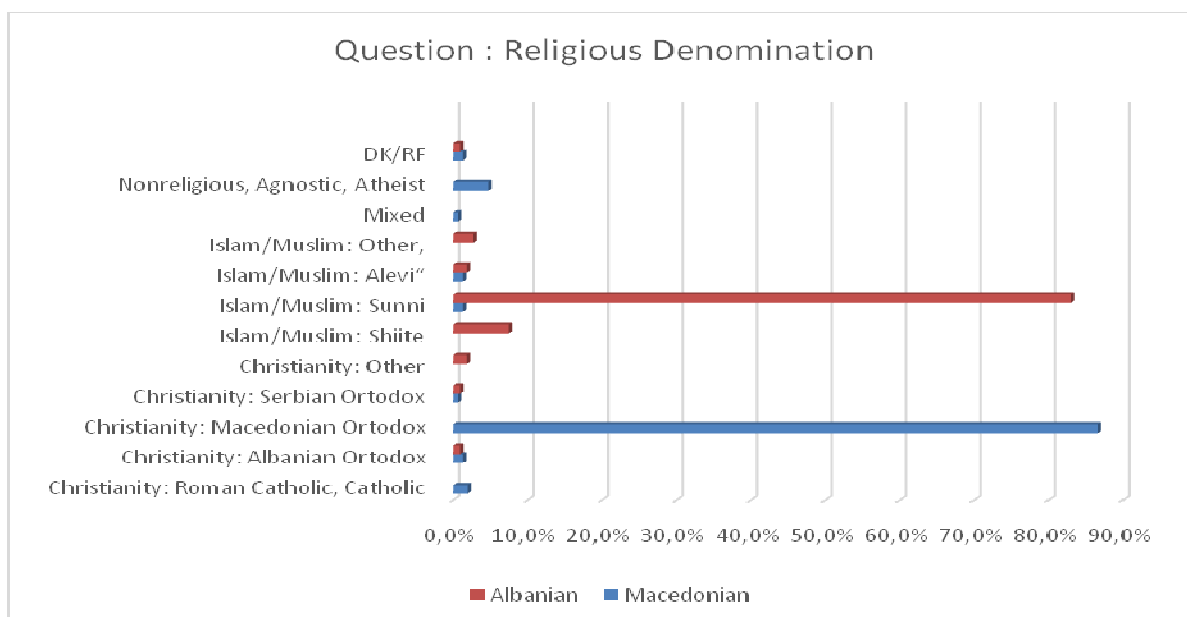


Table 18, religious denomination

The first reason is as we can see in table 18 and have also discussed in previous chapter, the ethnic division in the country is followed by a religious one so we can say that the feeling of injustice which exists to people when discussing about inequalities based on ethnic origin is being multiplied by the existence of inequalities based also on religious terms. The second one is the answers that people gave to the question concerning the celebrations of more religious and ethnic holidays in the country.

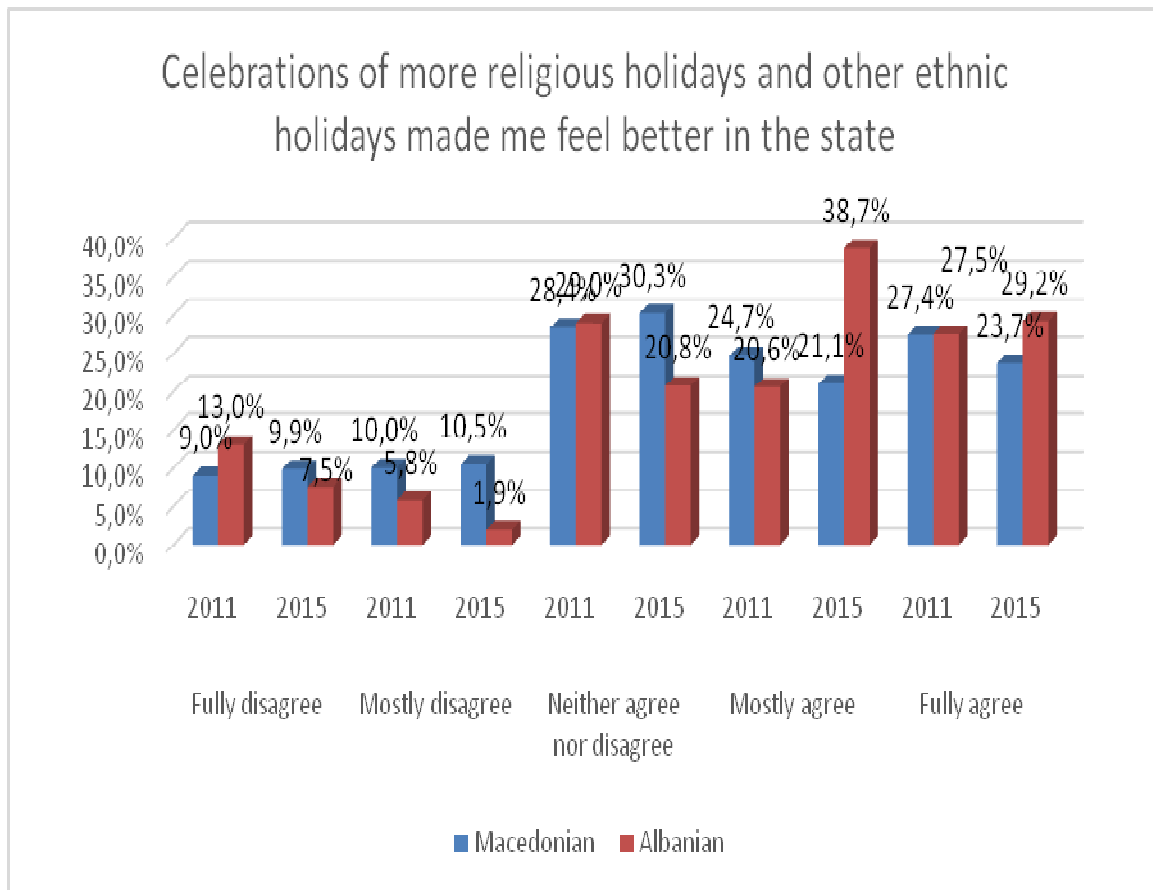


Table 19, celebrations of religious and ethnic holidays

As we can see clearly in table 19 the majority of people from both ethnic groups (even though there is a slight decrease among Macedonian population) feel better in the state when there are more ethnic and religious celebrations. Unfortunately according to Rizankoska, the parties in government from both ethnic groups are almost never present on commemoration of dates, historic people, or symbols from importance to the other

ethnic community, because they have divided their role of governors, each governs ‘their’ ethnic community only. This had led to the creation of two parallel worlds where ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians live next to each other, instead of living together (especially visible after the new territorial organization of Macedonia in 2004 and the beginning of the decentralization process). (Rizankoska et al 2016: 17-19). Furthermore as Klekovski mentions, “...*political elites still use ethno-nationalistic rhetoric for mobilization of their respective ethnic groups. Constitutional changes have fuelled mistrust, power struggles and, what is even more noticeable, caused a continual decline in confidence into the political process*” (Klekovski et al, 2010). Piacentini goes one step further from Klekovski by stressing that democratic tradition and institutions are still weak and not consolidated, while institutional and political mechanisms are largely exploited by a corrupt political elite. Accordingly, instead of going beyond ethnicity and ethnic collectivities, as encouraged by the Ohrid Framework Agreement, ethnic-based socio-political cleavages have been institutionally legitimized and exploited by ethnic representatives, welcoming and accepting a manageable divided system to avoid conflict and maintain stability. (Piacentini 2019:473-475).

Segment D: How people see the other in North Macedonia

The ending of segment C was the best assist to what we will see and examine in segment D. in this part we will first take a closer look on how people in North Macedonia perceive themselves, the other. Then we will get an idea on how people see the inter-ethnic relations in the country and finally what they think is the best for the future of their country.

Just few lines before we saw what Piacentini was speaking about ethnic-based socio-political cleavages and that in a sense those cleavages have been institutionally legitimized. But what can we say is the outcome of this legitimization? A good answer to this question is table 20.

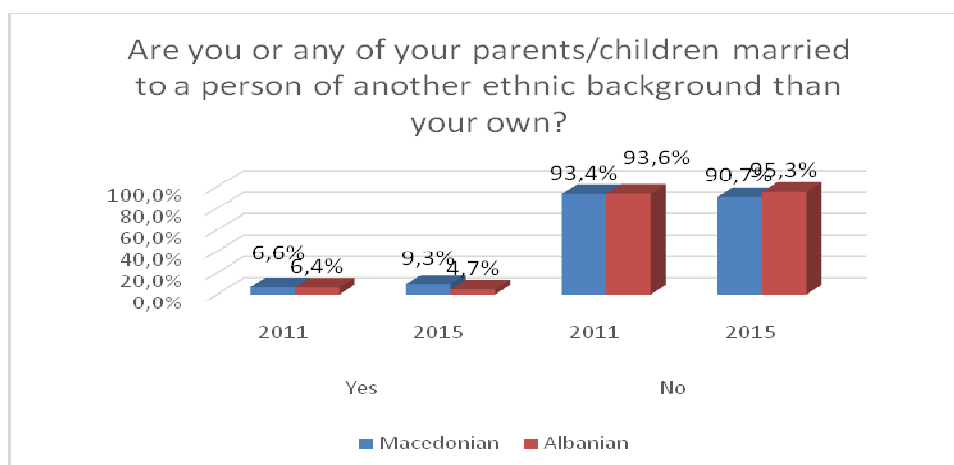


Table 20, marriages to a person of a different ethnic group

Probably there is not much to say about table 20 since the result can speak by itself. As we can clearly see the presence of ethnicity-based social cleavages sees the two major groups, Macedonians and Albanians, living their social and political lives quite distantly, conveying “*an impression of segregation and resentment*” (Irwin 2010, 342).

As we saw in segment A that people in North Macedonia seem sceptic about their future in the country. There is a good explanation by Easterly and Levine (Easterly and Levine, 1997) who have found that ethnic divisions are associated with lower growth rates and levels of output. Furthermore Bridgeman (Bridgeman, 2008) notes that ethnic division is a significant source of poverty. Since according to his research Ethnic divisions lead the government to make ethnic transfers, which distort investment decisions.

After we have seen whether there is a common social life among different ethnicities in North Macedonia, in the next table we will examine how people feel about belonging to a larger social construction larger to their ethnic group.

| Who do you feel you have more in common with... | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-------|--|-------|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Members of your ethnicity living outside of this country | | Members of ethnicities different from yours living in this country | | Both previous categories | | DK/RF | |
| | 2011 | 2015 | 2011 | 2015 | 2011 | 2015 | 2011 | 2015 |
| Macedonian | 29,6% | 14,4% | 13,5% | 16,4% | 51,6% | 28,8% | 4,8% | 40,4% |
| Albanian | 50,4% | 71,0% | 7,0% | 8,4% | 40,0% | 12,1% | 2,6% | 8,4% |

Table 21, common with.

As we can see from table 21 throughout the years, the trust between the two dominant communities has remained low. In addition or in effect as Markovic specifies the trust between them and the institutions, i.e., the so much needed social capital, was altogether absent. The inward-looking bent has also affected the sense of social mobility –except at political elites’ level it failed prey of the seemingly unbridgeable and self-sustained differences (Markovic et al, 2018)

As Engstrom notes, *“yet another problem with the Agreement is that it falls short of its intended purpose of promoting a civic concept of the Macedonian state, an idea that has been endorsed by an international community that lacks a proper understanding of the complexities of the Macedonian situation. Instead of promoting a multi-ethnic, civic, state, however, the Agreement sows the seeds for the creation of a binational, Macedonian Albanian state, in which other ethnic communities remain marginalized in the political sphere.”* (Engstrom, 2012: 18)

What Engstrom says can be viewed better in table 22 where we can see that the percentage especially of Macedonians who believe that North Macedonia is a multi-ethnic country has decreased significantly since 2011. On the other hand the percentage of Albanians who believe that North Macedonia is not a multi-ethnic country remains equally high.

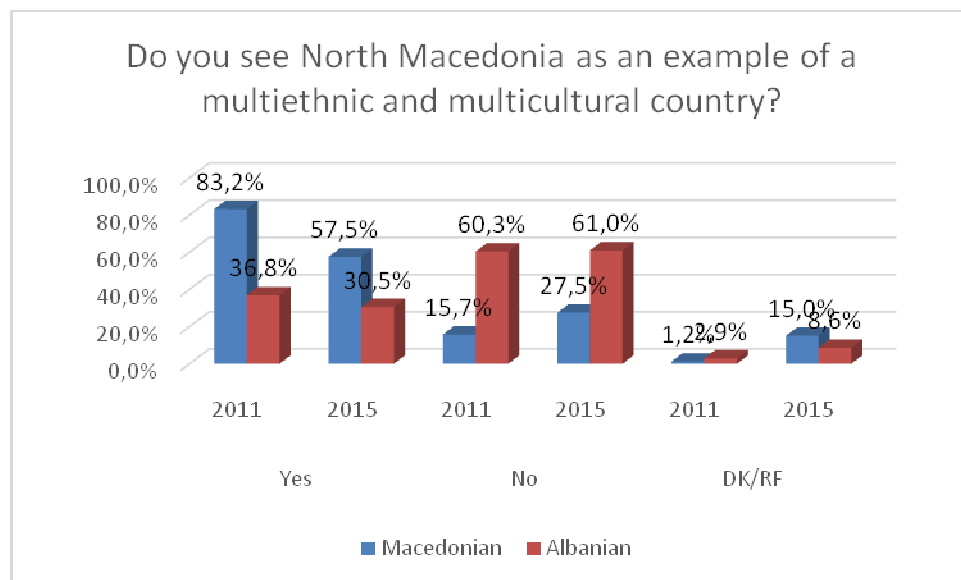


Table 22, North Macedonia a multicultural country?

As Reilly has said, North Macedonia is ranked among the so-called divided societies, meaning those ethnically diverse places “*where ethnicity is a politically salient cleavage around which interests are organized for political purposes*” (Reilly 2001, 4).

Unfortunately the case of North Macedonia is that this division as we have seen previously has been institutionalized. For example education remains segregated (Barbieri, Vrgova, and Bliznakovski 2013), with primary and secondary schools ethnically divided and pupils either going to different (ethnic) schools or the same schools but in different shifts or on different floors. If Macedonian students attend classes from morning until afternoon, Albanian students attend classes from the afternoon until evening in the same school building and vice versa. Conflicts in ethnically mixed schools in Skopje, Bitola and Kumanovo in 2003 strained ethnic relations even further and reinforced calls for full segregation of students in elementary and secondary schools (Myhrvold, 2005: 33). As a result, the two numerically largest communities in the country that comprise almost 90% of the population of North Macedonia almost never meet in the educational institutions through the course of their education life. Thus the educational segregation creates a number of political, educational and social difficulties which severely hamper integration efforts in post-Ohrid Agreement (Atanasovski 2008: 179 – 180). Past and current education programs developed by the Ministry for Education and Science and the Bureau for Development of Education do not have a single class or educational activity that Macedonian and Albanian students attend together. Even classes such as art, music and sports are not taken into consideration. Classes that promote ethnic and cultural awareness of different communities that students can take jointly in Macedonia do not exist in educational programs (Atanasovski 2008: 190 191). What is more interesting is that at present, there are no programs or projects aiming to introduce elective bilingual or trilingual primary or secondary education for the students from the ethnic Macedonian majority. Therefore, apart from the situations where minority students are studying some subjects in Macedonian language because of a teaching staff deficit, there has been very little move in the direction of bi-lingual or multi-lingual education. Separate systems of education have developed and been supported in various languages (Wilson, 2002: 54).

In addition political parties, media, cafes, music, municipalities, and neighbourhoods remain ethnically divided, and where social contacts between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians continue to be quite superficial (Piacentini, 2019)

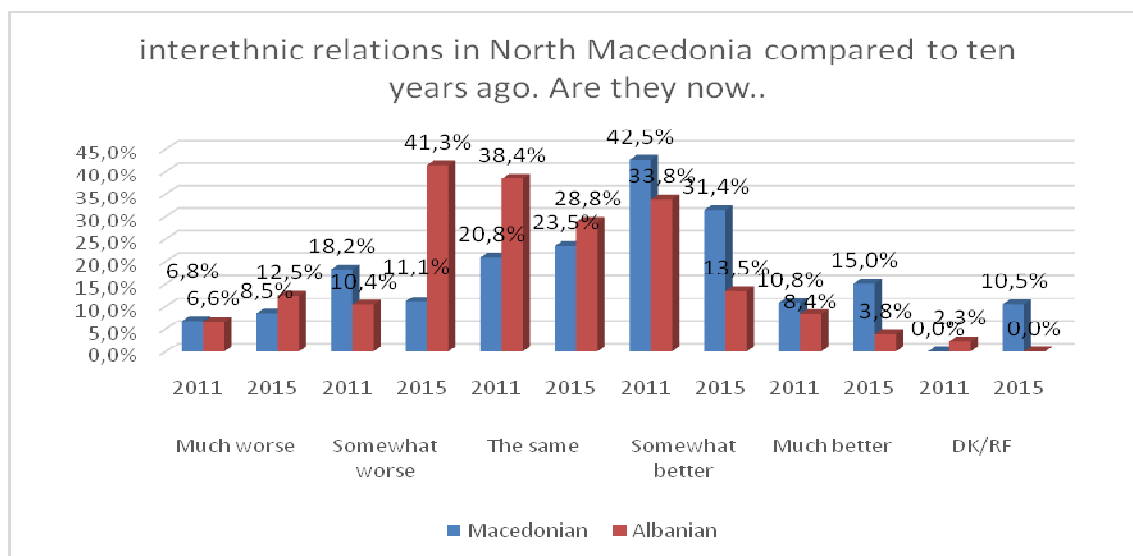


Table 23, interethnic relation compared to 10 years ago

Table 23 is more or less the visualization of what is discussed already. The percentage of Albanians that believe that the interethnic relations in the country are now somewhat worse has increased from 10.4% in 2011 to 41.3% in 2015. In addition the percentage of Macedonians that believe that the situation in the country is somewhat better has decreased substantially (it is good to have in mind that people who answered in 2011 had in mind that 10 years ago there was the 2001 crisis).

According to Rizankoska, as regarding the post Ohrid Framework Agreement's multicultural policies, the creation of separate school shifts for Albanians and Macedonians in certain municipalities, the language laws etc. have been assessed to widen the already existing cultural and linguistic gap between the communities. Albanian children know the Macedonian language less and less, and the Macedonian children are not obliged to study Albanian, so the communication is scarce. This too leads towards building parallel ethnic worlds instead of inter-ethnic cohabitation. (Rizankoska, 2016: 18)

This construction of parallel ethnic worlds we could say that bring us to table 24. What we clearly see is that the majority of Albanian population, almost 68% is now mostly or fully agrees to have any part of North Macedonia to be allowed to secede. This number in 2011 was 14%. It is also interesting that even the percentage of Macedonians who fully disagree with any separation of the country has slightly decreased.

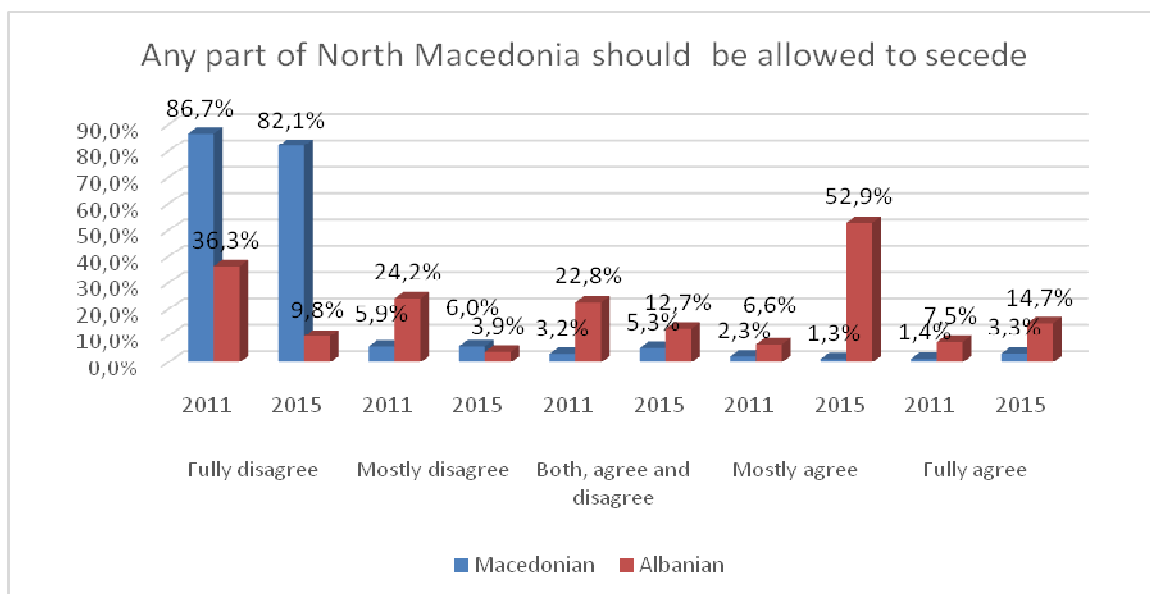


Table 24, secession from North Macedonia

It is obvious and somewhat well expected that in North Macedonia, the polarization of the two main ethnic groups has continued to be a major challenge for the future democratic development of the Republic of North Macedonia (Georgieva 2011: 15).

Before we finish our analysis we will have the opportunity to take a look on the results and the conclusions of a survey that took place in North Macedonia within the framework of the project “10 years from OFA” presented During OFA’s tenth anniversary Conference at the South Eastern European University by Prof. Hasan Jashari and by the research team of the South East European university in Tetovo. The aim of this research was to gather factographic data about citizens’ views regarding the framework agreement and its fate so far and in the future. (Jashari, 2011: 265-305)

“...From the analysis of the gathered material it was possible to say that in general the statistics show inconsistent attitudes of the respondents about the building of democracy and the development of civic prospects. There was a closeness concerning attitude, debates, media, and opinions of various political institutions, in relation to the Ohrid Agreement and its implementation. Viewed from the aspect of statistical significance, approximately 60% (658 respondents) are only passive participants in all discussions and debates made about the Agreement. Concluding to the fact that we were dealing with an attitude of civic inactivity. There is a significant persuasion that the Framework Agreement is designed precisely for political stability and inter-ethnic

confidence-building. Nearly half of the respondents, 46%, say that the agreement is important and 27% say that sometimes it is important and sometimes not. 37% of respondents evaluate the Agreement as addressing equally the different cultures, religions, languages, and ethnic communities. 57% (625 people) of respondents think that the Agreement suits the Albanians more, and 14% (153) believe it more suits the Macedonians. The agreement is mostly implemented in the field of local self-government, decentralization efforts, and education; there is less effort to promote the use of languages and multicultural development. Lack of public funding in Albanian areas causes dissatisfaction. Implementation of the Agreement is the biggest dilemma among Albanians; for, responses and reactions of Albanian respondents indicate that they are not satisfied with the implementation of the Agreement and its materialization in public life. Their expectations have been far greater in the sphere of official use of languages and youth employment. Respondents think that the international community and international diplomacy have great role in obtaining and preserving a ceasefire. Macedonians and Albanians also read and understand the Agreement in its own way. Opinions are that some Albanian and Macedonian parties help and some prevent the realization of the Agreement. The agreement is of great importance to multicultural society. Respondents agree with key provisions of the Agreement concerning non-discrimination, fair representation, employment in public administration and public enterprises. 57% of Albanians call the agreement important for the stability of Macedonia, while only 42% of the Macedonians think so. 18% of respondents think that the language of the other group should be taught; only 5% of Macedonian respondents think that they should learn Albanian...'

Even though the above mentioned survey is from 2011 which makes it more appropriate to relate it to the Ipsos survey we can definitely see that Macedonians and Albanians see, understand and assess the Agreement in their own way. Even then people were feeling that the Ohrid Framework Agreement is beneficial more to Albanians (as we also saw in our survey in table 10). In addition we can already spot the alienation between the different ethnic groups when we read that only 18% of the respondents think that the language of the other group should be taught.

“Divide and rule⁹¹”

Philip II of Macedon

Conclusion

At the beginning of this journey to the history and the present of North Macedonia and of Consociational theory it was very unclear if it would be possible that we will be able to have a clear view on what has happened to North Macedonia from 2001 until today. Of course we need to have in mind that here we have an Mphil thesis and not a Phd so there are some aspects that are not completely covered.

Recently there has been a lot of discussion on the use of mixed method designs in implementing research (Proctor et al., 2009; Landsverk et al., 2012; Palinkas et al. 2011; Aarons et al., 2012). Even though this has been used especially in medicine (*by the realization that the challenges of implementing treatments, interventions and programs are sufficiently complex that a single methodological approach is often inadequate* Palinkas et al 2015), also in other areas of research, mixed method designs are viewed as preferable because they provide a better view, analysis and understanding of research issues than qualitative or quantitative surveys alone (Palinkas et al., 2011). *“In such designs, qualitative methods are used to explore and obtain depth of understanding while quantitative methods are used to test and confirm hypotheses based on an existing conceptual model and obtain breadth of understanding of predictors of successful implementation”* (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

Nevertheless, as already mentioned before, our quantitative research is able to provide us with answers that can allow us to reach safe conclusions.

So in our three chapters we were able to follow the context concerning the last forty years of inter-ethnic relations in North Macedonia, to understand the reason behind the conflict between Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians, to see why at that moment the 2001 conflict was inevitable and how this conflict was resolved. We had also the opportunity to discuss the characteristics and the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement while at the same time we presented the theoretical background behind the agreement. Finally in the last chapter we witnessed how people in North

⁹¹ Quote attributed to Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great (Peter Jones, 2018)

Macedonia identify themselves, feel about their country, understand the Ohrid Framework Agreement and how they see the “other”.

As specified at the beginning of this Thesis, North Macedonia is a unique case for Europe since it has been the first peace treaty based on the theory of Consociationalism that was signed outside the context of a multinational organization (Both UK and Ireland were members of the EU when they signed the Good Friday Agreement) and also there was no one appointed to implement and safeguard it (In the Dayton Agreement we had the position of High Representative for this job).

So apart from some technical assistance provided by the EU and OSCE and of course some hopes and aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration, we can say that the government of North Macedonia was left alone to implement the agreement and create a functional multi-ethnic society.

Before we address the question of how the country attempted to achieve these goals it is interesting to see what international non-government organizations and global surveys say about North Macedonia. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's⁹² “*Democracy index 2018*”⁹³ North Macedonia is ranked 78th out of 167 countries and classified as a “Hybrid regime”. According to EIU Democracy Index 2018 Hybrid regime means that: “*Elections have substantial irregularities that often prevent them from being both free and fair. Government pressure on opposition parties and candidates may be common. Serious weaknesses are more prevalent than in flawed democracies—in political culture, functioning of government and political participation. Corruption tends to be widespread and the rule of law is weak. Civil society is weak. Typically, there is harassment of and pressure on journalists and the judiciary is not independent*” (EIU 2018: 49).

In the Transparency international's Corruption Perceptions Index 2018⁹⁴ North Macedonia scores 37/100 and is ranked 93rd out of 180 countries.

⁹² Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU is the research and analysis division of The Economist Group, the sister company to The Economist newspaper. EIU produces research and analysis on everything from national elections and international trade, to food security and sustainable cities.

⁹³ The full report can be found in http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy_Index_2018.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=Democracy2018 last accessed in 8th September 2019

⁹⁴ The full report can be viewed in <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018> last accessed in 8th September 2019

Freedom House's⁹⁵ Freedom in the World 2018 report⁹⁶ North Macedonia is described as a partly free country since the country continues to struggle with corruption, and while the media and civil society are active, journalists and activists face pressure and intimidation.

Finally in reporters without borders⁹⁷ "2018 World Press Freedom Index"⁹⁸ North Macedonia is ranked 109th out of 180 countries.

If we combine the above mentioned surveys with the outcome of our survey, it is possible to say that the Ohrid Framework Agreement not only failed to create a free and functional multi-ethnic society but has also failed miserably in establishing some cross-cutting cleavages and has proved disappointing in bringing about true reconciliation, leaving the country divided.

As we saw in our survey, Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians appear to have a completely different perception and idea on most of the issues concerning North Macedonia. The only thing they seem to have a common view on is that both do not want to have a relationship with each other, for as we saw in the previous chapter more than 90% of the population from both ethnic groups has no close relative married to a person from a different ethnic group. What is more surprising and at the same time worrying is that even until today a large part of the Macedonian Albanian population - more than 67% - considers that a part of North Macedonia Should be allowed to secede.

Florian Bieber describes very well the situation in North Macedonia by mentioning that in fact the Agreement's failure more or less was that "*it was unable to fundamentally transform interethnic relations in Macedonia and ethnicity remains a potent force in the political debates of the country*" (Bieber, 2009: 207).

⁹⁵ Freedom House is an independent watchdog organization based in the US dedicated to the expansion of freedom and democracy around the world.

⁹⁶ The full report can be viewed in https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FITW_Report_2018_Final_SinglePage.pdf last accessed in 8th September 2019

⁹⁷ Reporters without Borders (RSF) is an independent NGO with consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF) and is one of the world's leading NGOs in the defense and promotion of freedom of information.

⁹⁸ The full report can be viewed in <https://rsf.org/en/ranking/2018> last accessed in 8th September 2019

Unfortunately rather than using the Ohrid Framework agreement as a tool for creating a sustainable society, politicians in the country have use it to manipulate the electorate in order to establish and maintain their power either by playing the nationalistic card or by the use of employment in the public administration, in the name of fair representation of ethnic communities (Rizankoska, J. & Trajkoska, J. 2016).

Though, having in mind the of the SDSM's support to Macedonian Albanian Mayors during the 2016 local elections and more recently the newly formed election alliance (announced on February 2020) between the main ruling Social Democrats and the ethnic Albanian BESA –North Macedonia has never before seen an alliance between mainly Macedonian and Albanian players formed ahead of the polls- can we hope that the practice of ethnic voting can be challenged putting a stepping stone towards inter-ethnic cooperation in the country? The first reaction from the biggest Macedonian Albanian party DUI was to condemn the new alliance pointing out that the new agreement between the Social Democrats and BESA would only damage the Albanian vote in the following general elections (Marusic, 2020).

As Alexander Clapp mentioned in 2016, *“Gruevski’s most stunning achievement has been the hijacking of the Ohrid Agreement by institutionalizing two parallel societies instead of integrating two equal ones. In Macedonia today, Slavic Macedonians and Albanians have limited interaction. They live on opposite banks of the Vardar River. They rarely attend one another’s protests. Each is represented by twin strata of political elites that mirror one another’s corruption and cronyism. In Macedonia today, political elites in both the Slavic and Albanian communities exploit ethnic tensions to distract from the narrative of corruption”*(Clapp, 2016)

What Clapp mentioned triggers a series of questions not only about the Ohrid Framework agreement and the situation in North Macedonia but also for the nature and efficacy of consociational arrangements in total. Is the issue that bad politicians took advantage of the Ohrid Framework Agreement? Or did the Ohrid Framework Agreement give politicians the opportunity to take advantage of the situation?

It is very difficult to answer to these questions only by analysing a quantitative research. As noted also above mixed method designs are viewed as preferable because they provide a better view, analysis and understanding of research issues than qualitative or quantitative surveys alone. For instance a qualitative survey with targeted interviews could give us more answers on whether the SDSM policy and recent alliance is only a way to gain some temporary political power in order to establish their authority against VMRO-DPMNE or a sincere effort to move to a closer inter-ethnic cooperation?

This of course is a question that needs a more in-depth analysis which could and I believe should be done at PhD level; nevertheless we can observe two similar cases in which we have the implementation of the consociation theory.

The agreement in Bosnia continues by some people to be referred as a model for various conflicts around the world, (Soeren Keil & Valery Perry, 2015), (Mujkić, 2015). although Bosnia almost 25 years after the signing of the Dayton agreement, is a country with a corrupt and dysfunctional political system which local elites are not at all interested in improving or changing (Gilbert et al., 2015), (Hasić et al., 2018), (Kartsonaki, 2017). Bosnia just like North Macedonia is very low in comparison to Western European standards when it comes to democracy, rule of law and transparency. Bosnia According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's "*Democracy index 2018*"⁹⁹ is ranked 101st out of 167 and is classified as "Hybrid regime" and as partly free by Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2018 report¹⁰⁰. In addition in the Transparency international's Corruption Perceptions Index 2018¹⁰¹ Bosnia scores 38/100 and is ranked 89th out of 180 countries.

It is true from what international organizations are saying that both Bosnia and North Macedonia are far from ideal democracies. With this in mind we could say that in Northern Ireland the situation was ideal or at least as good as it gets. After all, the Good Friday Agreement from its beginning was considered as a success (Wolff, 2001), or as said by other scholars, a rebirth for Northern Ireland. (Armstrong et al., 2019). What is a contradiction to that is that in the text of the Revised Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland included in the Withdrawal Agreement between the EU and the UK¹⁰² of the 17th of October 2019 both signatory parties agreed to bypass or even ignore one of the four main characteristics of the consociation democracy, this of Mutual veto or 'concurrent

⁹⁹ The full report can be found in http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy_Index_2018.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=Democracy2018 last assessed in 8th September 2019

¹⁰⁰ The full report can be viewed in https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FITW_Report_2018_Final_SinglePage.pdf last accessed in 8th September 2019

¹⁰¹ The full report can be viewed in <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018> last accessed in 8th September 2019

¹⁰² The full text of the Revised Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland included in the Withdrawal Agreement can be viewed in https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/revised_withdrawal_agreement_including_protocol_on_ireland_and_northern_ireland.pdf last accessed in 25th of October 2019.

majority' rule, which serves as an additional protection of vital minority interests. According to article 18, paragraph 1 *“Within 2 months before the end of both the initial period and any subsequent period, the United Kingdom shall provide the opportunity for democratic consent in Northern Ireland to the continued application of Articles 5 to 10.* Then in paragraph 5 of the same article we have the following, *“For the purposes of this Article, the initial period is the period ending 4 years after the end of the transition period. **Where the decision reached in a given period was on the basis of a majority of Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly, present and voting**¹⁰³, the subsequent period is the 4year period following that period, for as long as Articles 5 to 10continue to apply. **Where the decision reached in a given period had cross-community support**, the subsequent period is the 8-year period following that period, for as long as Articles 5 to 10continue to apply”*

As we can clearly see the two major signatory parts of the Good Friday Agreement, the UK and the Republic of Ireland (here as part of the EU and as a driving force of the Brexit deal in terms of the status of the Northern Ireland after Brexit) have decided to bypass the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement in order to of course to protect what they believe serves their interests best. Furthermore it can be understood that the proper implementation of the Good Friday Agreement might be an obstacle to what they feel is the best for the future of Northern Ireland. It is very early to see how this withdrawal agreement and of course Brexit whatever form might eventually take will affect Northern Ireland. Nevertheless the will of the two parts to bypass the provision of the Good Friday Agreement can be seen as an indication of the future of the Good Friday Agreement and an alarming notice for similar consociational agreements.

In the introduction it was mentioned that North Macedonia is a unique case since there is no outside force trying to implement or protecting the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Even though we have seen that the Ohrid Framework Agreement has failed to fulfil its purposes, today there is no armed conflict in North Macedonia. For some this can be the result of the aspiration for EU and NATO integration. EU membership is another area that Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Albanians agree on.

¹⁰³ Writing in bold letters and underlining is not part of the original document

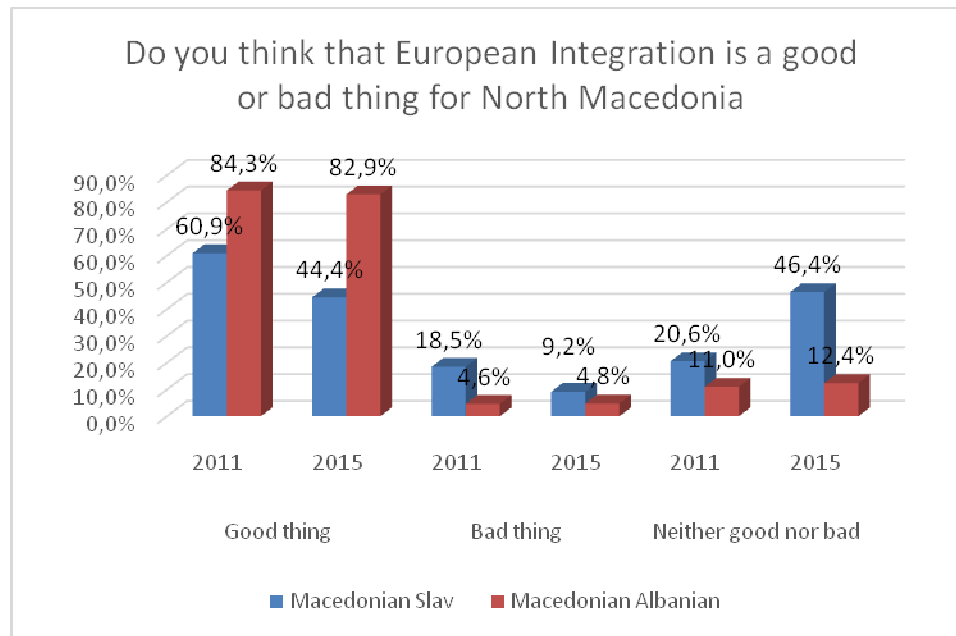


Table 25, EU integration

Unfortunately, the EU Council summit on the 17th of October 2019 failed to agree on the opening of EU accession talks for North Macedonia and Albania. This has resulted in political turmoil in North Macedonia according to a news report from Nick Kampouris (Kampouris, 2019). The prime minister in an effort to defuse the situation (Stefanello, 2019) announced snap elections which following a meeting among political leaders in Skopje were scheduled for April 12th 2020. Although we always hope for the best, a few days after the announcement of the early elections we had the first “victim”. The State Statistical Office of North Macedonia suggested again postponing holding a census, which has been delayed for many years. Last time there was a census in North Macedonia was in 2002. An attempt to have a census in North Macedonia in 2011 ended in fiasco (Karajkov, 2011) since four days before its scheduled completion date, the State Census Commission resigned due to ethnic disputes (Marusic 2019b). The need to postpone the planned April 2020 census arose when the political leaders in North Macedonia agreed to hold early elections in April 12th

British Prime Minister Harold Wilson once said that “*a week is a long time in politics*”. Apparently in the Balkans it is more that true since especially after the failure of the EU Council summit to agree on the opening of EU accession for North Macedonia, developments are running at a staggering pace. Our duty is not to sit back and watch but study, work, observe, spot the problems, try and explain the mechanisms and if possible try and propose solutions.

We have seen from previous negotiations between EU and EU Candidate Countries that the negotiation process has led to an important number of domestic political and social transformations. *“Through the accession process the EU can directly affect policy and institutional preferences”* (Grabbe, 2006: 201). In that sense an agreement for opening negotiations between EU and North Macedonia can have positive effects towards democratization and empowerment of the rule of law in the country. On the other hand further delay, or even worst - even though currently does not seem possible - an agreement between EU and Albania can make the situation in North Macedonia dangerously unstable. Luckily, on the 26th of March the European Union leaders have given North Macedonia and Albania formal approval to begin talks to join the EU, although no date was given for the commencement of formal talks.

Finally and most importantly we have seen that in North Macedonia, ethnic distance is greater in a number of fields than in most other countries of the region. The implementation of Ohrid Framework Agreement as we have already said has led to a number of segregationist practices, including those in the educational sector. The problem of physical segregation in public schools is of major concern since now the educational system reinforces instead of counteracts ethnic divisions. Of course it is more than important to respect the rights of each child and of their parent to cultivate their culture, religion and the use of their mother tongue but at the same time the North Macedonian government it is important to make some steps towards a more integrated education and encourage inter-ethnic mingling of students. That would help students to develop a bigger sense of civic respect for their fellow classmates and their cultural differences.

Before closing, it is important to notice again that today in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia and in North Macedonia we have peace. Even though we have seen that the situation in North Macedonia is problematic, international organizations are saying that the situation in Bosnia is far from ideal and at the same time Brexit might leave the Good Friday Agreement heavily wounded the Consociation arrangements in all three places have helped to put an end to inter-ethnic conflicts and bring peace.

The problem is that at least in our case, the same Consociation arrangements that stop a war, according to the data from our research have been used widely by local elites in order to maintain the fear of a conflict and widen the gap between the two major ethnic groups. Even though as we have already discussed the case of North Macedonia needs to be examined thoroughly and within the framework of a PhD thesis it seems that in cases of incomplete democracies or as EIU Democracy Index describes as Hybrid Regimes Consociation arrangements are failing to create solid cross cutting cleavages sustainable communities and subsequently sustainable peace.

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